

# The Larches

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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DfE registration number	884/6010
Unique Reference Number (URN)	117048
Inspection number	364907
Inspection dates	12 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.<sup>1,2</sup>

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

## **Information about the school**

The Larches School is a small independent special school located on two sites in Leominster. The school opened in March 1996. It is registered for 20 pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. Currently there are 16 students on roll and all have severe emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Some also have moderate learning difficulties. All of the pupils are White British and most have a statement of special educational needs. Most are looked after by various local authorities in England and Wales and are resident in a number of children's homes run by the proprietors. All pupils have had a disrupted education which has adversely affected their attainment and self-esteem. The school aims 'to be a place in which pupils are given opportunities to become confident learners in a caring environment, where they are supported and encouraged to achieve personal success both now and in the future. The Larches values all individuals attending and celebrates learning.' The present headteacher joined the school in September 2010.

## **Context of the inspection**

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2009. Not all the requirements were met. Following this it drew up and submitted an action plan to address the requirements that were not met; this was evaluated and accepted in April 2010. This is the first monitoring visit to check the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.

## **Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan**

When the school was inspected in December 2009, there were no schemes of work for music, citizenship, information and communication technology (ICT) and or modern foreign languages. The school submitted an action plan which proposed that these schemes would be completed by September 2010. This visit found that while these subjects are being taught on a regular basis, comprehensive schemes of work are still not in place and the requirements are not met. A rudimentary scheme of work for ICT, based on nationally available plans, is now in place and is being

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

implemented. The scheme of work for French is very basic. It draws upon commercially available units of work but has yet to be customised to the needs and aptitudes of students at the school. Although music is being taught alongside drama, the school's scheme of work for music is not adequate to inform planning.

There is no overarching scheme of work for citizenship although there is evidence of citizenship elements in personal, social and health education schemes and in other curricular areas, such as English. As a result, the school still does not meet the requirement, identified in the inspection in December 2009, to ensure that students are provided with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England.

The inspection in December 2009 identified that that while some students had statements that prescribed that the full National Curriculum should be taught, the school's provision did not always ensure a full entitlement because some subjects were not taught in sufficient depth or at all. The school has now successfully addressed this requirement as detailed in its action plan.

When the school was inspected in December 2009, not all the portable electrical appliances had been checked by a suitable person and records were incomplete. In addition, the school's admission register did not include all the required information. These shortcomings have been successfully remedied, in line with the proposals and timescales in the school's action plan, and the requirements are now met.

The inspection in December 2009 found that there was no suitable facility for pupils who might become ill. The school has since suitably equipped a room for students who are ill. The inspection found that the school did not provide financial information to local authorities placing pupils at the school. The school has now taken steps to ensure that local authorities are provided with an annual account of the income received and expenditure incurred by the school for each student they fund.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010<sup>3</sup> ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- produce and implement schemes of work for all subjects, including music information and communication technology, citizenship and for any modern foreign language taught (paragraph 2(1))
- ensure that all students are provided with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 5(d)).

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made)

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for pupils with severe emotional, social and behavioural difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	March 1996		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-16 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 10	Girls: 6	Total: 16
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 10	Girls: 3	Total: 13
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 9	Girls: 6	Total: 15
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£31,200		
<b>Address of school</b>	The Larches Coningsby Road Leominster HR6 8LL		
<b>Telephone number</b>	0845 6182684		
<b>Email address</b>	thelarches@clifford-house.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Fox		
<b>Proprietors</b>	Nicklas Nenadich, John Brierley, Linda Gresty		