

Lewis Charlton School

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	George Derby
Social care inspector	Caroline Brailsford

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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, and under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.^{1,2,3}

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

Lewis Charlton residential special school is located in Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire. It is registered for up to 41 students, aged 11 to 19 years, with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are currently 35 students on roll, including five weekly boarders. The school is on three sites; the newest site, 'The Village', which formally opened in September 2010, is a short distance from the main school. This addition has significantly increased the school's accommodation.

Context of the inspection

The school had a light touch inspection in 2009 when it was judged to provide a good quality of education and boarding. An emergency school inspection took place in January 2011. This was carried out jointly with a social care inspector. The school failed a significant number of regulations in relation to students' welfare, health and safety and the suitability of the proprietor, staff and supply staff. A number of the national minimum standards for residential special schools were also unmet.

The school's action plan was evaluated and accepted in April 2011, although some improvement was needed. The current inspection was undertaken to evaluate the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan. This was carried out with a social care inspector who was also undertaking a full inspection of the school's boarding provision.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The school has made inadequate progress in implementing all aspects of its action plan. Although the school has successfully addressed many of the failed regulations and national minimum standards identified at the emergency visit, some still remain

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000014_en_1

unmet. In addition, the school does not consistently record fire drills or emergency lighting checks and has not sufficiently updated all of its fire risk assessments, especially for the new building. This means that it does not comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹.

At the time of the inspection in January 2011, the school's child protection procedures were inadequate and concerns had been expressed by the local authority and the police. The school could not provide evidence that all staff had been subject to an enhanced criminal records bureau check and checks on supply staff were not recorded on the single central register. Physical restraint was used to deal with students who were at risk of injuring themselves or others, and this was not fully recorded. The school's behaviour policy did not fully describe all the steps taken to manage students' behaviour and the rewards and sanctions used. Absence was authorised in some cases when students were excluded from school, or when requests were made for them to stay at home, for which there was no reasonable excuse. A number of national minimum standards for boarding were unmet, related to safeguarding, staff recruitment and the management of behaviour.

Child protection procedures are now thorough. All staff, including the designated persons, are trained fully, in line with the school's plan for improvement. They know what to do when there are safeguarding matters to address and who to turn to for advice. Detailed guidance on what to do if there is an allegation made against a member of staff is now included in the safeguarding policy.

The behaviour policy has been re-written, in accordance with the school's plans. It is now comprehensive with clearly defined rewards, sanctions and procedures to follow. Staff are well informed about school policies and procedures and who to turn to for further guidance. The number of interventions that lead to a physical restraint has reduced and staff make better use of the strategies outlined in students' detailed behaviour plans. Some restraints occur when there are concerns over students' safety on the main school site, especially if they are threatening to abscond. This is because of the school's proximity to a main road. The school has now taken action to close its large gates; this ensures a total boundary around the perimeter, thus reducing the concerns over safety and the likelihood of associated restraints.

The school's plan for improvement has not been effectively implemented with respect to the recording of events that lead to physical restraint. The school has added sections to the reporting procedures so that, for instance, students' views can be added. However, reports are still not detailed enough. They do not show how staff have tried to defuse a situation. In addition, the records do not use specific enough language to describe what happened. Attendance is now accurately recorded and staff are aware of when to authorise absence.

The headteacher and a director have undergone safer recruitment training. It is also planned that the head of care will also undertake such training. The required checks are carried out on staff, including temporary staff. The school is now able to demonstrate that all enhanced criminal records bureau checks have been completed.

However, it still does not ensure that supply staff details are recorded on its single central register of recruitment and vetting checks.

The residential standards require the school leaders' effective monitoring of records and activities and the taking of any necessary action. This standard was not met at the time of the inspection in January 2011. While there is some monitoring of the patterns of behaviour in relation to individual students, too little is done across the school and residence. The headteacher has delegated responsibility for specific actions to certain staff but has not ensured that the impact of their work is checked. As a result, there are weaknesses in record keeping.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

As a result of this inspection, the school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010⁴ ('the Regulations'), as follows:

- ensure in the boarding accommodation that there are arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders and that they have regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools (paragraph 8)
- ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹ (paragraph 13)
- ensure that a properly completed record is completed when a physical restraint is imposed upon students for serious misbehaviour (paragraph 16)
- ensure that for each member of staff not directly employed by the school, the register shows that the school has carried out the checks referred to in 20(2)(a) together with the date the written notification that each check was made or the certificate obtained, was received (paragraph 22(5)).

In order to meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated regulations, the school should:

- ensure that where physical intervention is used, records provide sufficient detail of the event (NMS 10.9 and 10.14)
- ensure the headteacher or senior members of staff, delegated by the headteacher to do so, monitor and sign records as per NMS 32.2, to identify any patterns or issues requiring action, and takes any follow up or consequential action (NMS 32.2).

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties		
Date school opened	September 2003		
Age range of pupils	11–19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 25	Girls: 10	Total: 35
Number of boarders	Boys: 3	Girls: 2	Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 25	Girls: 10	Total: 35
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 5	Girls: 4	Total: 9
Annual fees (day pupils)	£43,152		
Annual fees (boarders)	£79,490		
Address of school	North Street Ashby-de-la-Zouch		
Telephone number	01530 560775		
Email address	g.pearson@lewischarltonschool.org		
Headteacher	Ms Georgina Pearson		
Proprietor	Ms Georgina Pearson		