

# Walton Progressive School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup> Five pupils are currently looked after in a residential home owned by the school's proprietor.

## **Information about the school**

Walton Progressive School is located in the Walton area of Liverpool. It was registered in 2000 as an independent special day school for up to 40 boys and girls with highly complex needs, aged from eight to 19 years. Sixteen of the 17 pupils currently on roll are White British and all are funded by local authorities in the North West. All have statements of special educational needs, associated with moderate or severe learning difficulties; some have speech and language or communication difficulties, complex behaviours which may be challenging in social settings, or a diagnosis of autism. Most have experienced major disruptions to their previous education, including poor attendance and exclusion. Five pupils are currently looked after in residential provision owned by the school's proprietor, The European Care Group. The school was last inspected in April 2008. The school has no religious affiliation. It aims to provide 'the highest quality of education where inclusion, enrichment and progression enable achievement for all students in preparation for the responsibilities, experiences and opportunities of adult life'.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Walton Progressive School provides a good quality of education with outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school meets its aims well through careful assessment of pupils' individual progress; good teaching; and a broad curriculum tuned to meet the specific needs of each pupil. The enthusiastic staff are well-qualified to teach pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work very effectively as a team to safeguard and motivate pupils and to promote pupils' good progress and behaviour. The school has improved well since its last inspection. All of the regulations for registration as an independent school are met.

## **Quality of education**

The curriculum is good, broad and balanced throughout the school. Staff make careful use of pupils' statements of special educational needs and their own assessments to create individual education plans, detailed schemes of work for subjects and individualised timetables for each pupil. This good planning ensures

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

that pupils receive a personalised curriculum. Before admission to the school, pupils' needs and attainments are assessed using a variety of methods, in consultation with parents, carers and staff from pupils' previous schools. This assessment is used to design individual provision concentrating initially on stabilising behaviour and developing the motivation to communicate and to learn. Thereafter, a broad curriculum covers basic skills and a wide range of subjects, including all subjects of the National Curriculum. Good quality speech and language therapy for those pupils who need it is supplemented by the well-coordinated efforts of staff to develop thinking, speaking and listening skills. Older pupils have access to a range of externally accredited courses and a range of vocational and careers activities. Provision to develop independent learning skills covers a wide range of activities and staff coordinate their tuition well, both within the school and, where appropriate, between the school, parents, carers and residential care workers. A wide range of activities enriches the curriculum and develops sporting, hobby and cultural interests.

Teaching and assessment, and the organisation of group and individualised learning, are good throughout the school. Some teaching is outstanding. Staff use a wide range of interesting and active teaching methods to engage pupils. A key teaching skill of the staff is to know precisely when a pupil's concentration span has reached its limit and to have alternative activities and opportunities for quiet reflection available to which pupils can be diverted. In lessons, the necessarily high ratio of staff to pupils helps to give pupils the very close attention they need to maintain concentration and good behaviour and to ensure safety in the many practical activities provided. Staff have good subject knowledge. Teaching and support staff work very well together, though on one occasion during the inspection the timetabling of teaching spaces was not fully adhered to, leading to an overlap of activities which hindered learning.

Teaching is very well supported by the considerable lengths the school goes to in assessing the progress of each pupil. A wide range of formal tests, marking procedures and informal observations are well recorded and analysed to enable teachers to develop courses, set targets and plan lessons and routines which promote small, progressive steps in learning. The last inspection found that the tracking of progress lacked detail and precision at times. The school has now developed thorough tracking procedures to assess and record pupils' individual progress in very small steps. Staff make good use of the resulting information to plan future learning and report regularly to parents and carers.

Pupils' progress is good throughout the school. It varies according to the length of time pupils have been in the school: initially, the focus is rightly on stabilising behaviour and improving attitudes and readiness to learn. As these objectives are met, staff are increasingly able to focus on academic and personal development and progress in these areas accelerates as pupils move up the school.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding throughout the school. Pupils' progress in their personal development is very well recognised in comments made by parents and carers to the inspection team and to the school. Levels of enjoyment are high, as shown in lessons, in comments made by the pupils and in records kept by the staff. Progress is evident in initial attitudes changing from indifference and school refusal to friendly and trusting cooperation in lessons; in a growing willingness to listen, speak and express views politely, and often enthusiastically, to staff and within pupil groups and in motivation and confidence to participate in activities. It is also reflected in pupils' attendance, now standing at 97%. This compares very well with the poor attendance of most pupils in their previous schools, where some did not attend at all.

Behaviour is good and very well managed by the school. This is based on excellent routines and procedures, a high level of staff training and the willingness of staff to cooperate and work well as a team. As pupils overcome their initial difficulties after admission to the school they develop warmth towards staff and a willingness to engage with each other in small groups. Occasionally, when pupils relapse into disruptive outbursts, staff have good skills and procedures to calm them down and restore order. Staff also have good skills in preventing such behaviour and in promoting an atmosphere in which good behaviour is accepted as the norm. As a result, pupils feel positive as seen, for example, in the palpable sense of fun and self-confidence in competitive group work in a science lesson observed. This enjoyment and developing self-esteem was seen in other lessons observed. Pupils are helped to be able to distinguish right from wrong and to be considerate to others. They are also given a good range of opportunities in and out of the school to understand aspects of community life and that ours is a multi-ethnic country with a range of cultural traditions. Pupils learn about public institutions and come to understand that they influence the way that we live.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school's procedures to promote the welfare, health, safety and safeguarding of pupils, on- and off-site, are good. Policies are well written, regularly updated, and in line with government guidance and regulations. They are well understood and implemented by all staff, who work in a professional and cooperative manner in the interests of the pupils. This is aided by extensive staff training in procedures including health and safety, behaviour management, child protection and safeguarding. Staff keep detailed records of pupils' progress in their personal development, with sensitive coverage of their specific medical conditions. Procedures to deal with problems relating to health and hygiene are well conceived and assiduously implemented. Staff have a deep understanding of the physical and psychological problems faced by each pupil and together they use effective strategies to promote their health and safety in all aspects of school life. The school has very effective procedures to prevent bullying and harassment. Provision for first aid is good. There have been no exclusions or incidents of bullying

or harassment in the last year. The school provides a good choice of healthy foods during breaks and lunchtime and pupils are encouraged by their support staff to make sensible choices. Those pupils who are sufficiently capable are given catering lessons and the one observed was good. Good opportunities are provided for regular exercise, for example in swimming, climbing and cycling off the site, use of a hydrotherapy pool and gardening on the site and football during breaks. The school also offers more ambitious activities such as camping. These are well supervised. Given the very different characteristics of the pupils, staff are rightly assiduous in helping them to choose activities which meet their needs as well as their interests. A three-year plan to improve access to the building is in place and the requirements of Equality Act 2010 are met. Fire procedures are well organised.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The suitability of all staff to work with students has been checked. The information is held on a single central register of staff as required.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school building is a modern single-storey building which was formerly an annexe to the local hospital. It provides sufficient space for pupils to have their own individual study bases. The educational facilities and their organisation are of a very high standard. Provision for specialist learning in a range of subjects and activities is very good. There is a small but adequate playground with a soft surface and a number of climbing frames. Toilet provision is suitable and there is a medical room with the required handbasin.

### **Provision of information**

Parents, carers and staff in the placing local authorities are provided with an extensive range of information about the school through a variety of appropriate means. They are well informed about the progress of students through regular meetings, telephone discussions and reports.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's procedures for handling complaints meet the regulations.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development:

- ensure that the timetabling of individualised activities is fully adhered to so that learning in one class is not disturbed by the activity being carried by another class.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties and a range of other special needs and disabilities
<b>Date school opened</b>	2000
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–19 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 12      Girls: 4      Total: 16
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 1      Girls: 0      Total: 1
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 13      Girls: 4      Total: 17
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 5      Girls: 0      Total: 5
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£57,000 to £73,000
<b>Address of school</b>	European Lifestyles Education Services Rice Lane Liverpool Merseyside L9 1NR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 525 4004
<b>Email address</b>	di@europeanwelcare.com
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Diane Jones
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Anoup Treon

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



21 October 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Walton Progressive School, Liverpool, L9 1NR**

When I visited your school recently, I promised to write to you about how well I think it is doing.

- Walton Progressive is a good school. The staff and principal take care of you very well and give you a good education.
- The staff work very hard to understand what you need to do to learn well. They give you lots of interesting activities which I know you enjoy, both in school and in other places.
- You grow up and mature very well in your time at the school. I was pleased to see how you get better in the way you talk and listen to others, and treat them kindly. I do hope you carry on trying hard to get even better at this.
- Most of the time, you behave well and are polite to each other and the staff.
- The staff work hard to take care of you and ensure that you stay safe in the building and lessons, and also when you visit places outside the school.

To make the school even better, I have asked the school's leaders to ensure that the learning taking place in one class is not disturbed by any activities going on in another class.

I enjoyed being with you in my visit. Thank you to those who spoke to me and showed me your work. I wish you and the staff all good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Toft  
Lead Inspector