

Waterloo Lodge 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Waterloo Lodge School is an independent special school for students aged from 11 to 18 years all of whom have statements of special educational needs relating to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school opened in June 1995 and currently has 39 students on roll, of whom 11 are girls. Students are placed at the school by seven local authorities and currently all students are of White British heritage.

The school's premises are a Georgian Grade II listed former country house on the outskirts of Chorley, Lancashire. The proprietor is Acorn Care and Education Group. The school aims to provide a caring, structured learning environment in which all students can develop academically, socially, emotionally and morally to their full potential and in which students and staff feel safe, secure and valued. The school was last inspected in April 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Waterloo Lodge provides an outstanding quality of education; the curriculum, the quality of teaching and assessment and the provision for students' personal development are all outstanding. The staff understand and make exemplary provision for the individual needs of each student under the highly effective leadership of the headteacher and senior staff. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students and promotion of their welfare, health and safety are outstanding and students respond with an outstanding quality of behaviour and respect. As a result, and despite the difficulties experienced in their earlier education, students make good, and often outstanding, progress with their learning. The school, especially the curriculum, has improved since the last inspection; the school fulfils its aims successfully and now meets all the regulations for registration as an independent school.

Quality of education

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for all of its students. In Key Stage 3, all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and students have the opportunity to achieve entry level certification in a range of subjects when they are ready. Since

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

the time of the last inspection, suitable provision has been made to include the teaching of music and Spanish for all students in Key Stage 3. The quality of the curriculum is greatly enhanced by the detailed information about students' strengths and weaknesses which is provided and regularly updated for all staff. As a result, teachers' planning and its focus on the identified learning needs of each individual student are of the highest quality. Schemes of work and lesson plans identify appropriate strategies for attending to individual needs as set out in individual education plans. These strategies are implemented consistently and effectively. An appropriately broad curriculum is maintained as students move into Key Stage 4 with a clear focus on the preparation of students for accreditation through entry level certificates, foundation skills tests and a substantial range of GCSE courses. The academic curriculum is enhanced by suitable and comprehensive courses in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and courses in physical education which is available as a GCSE course. There are currently no post-16 students on roll. The school makes good use of external agencies, including speech and language therapists who are used effectively to support the school's already strong arrangements for meeting the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs.

A further outstanding feature of the curriculum is the provision of a wide range of experiences beyond the school premises. Vocational programmes, work experience and college courses, are expertly tailored to the individual needs of students as they prepare for life after school. These arrangements provide appropriate flexibility for individuals to attend for up to two days a week while continuing with their school-based education. In addition, a regular programme of outdoor adventurous activities is provided; it is appreciated by all students. Students talk enthusiastically, for example, about their experiences of rock climbing and canoeing. Further enrichment is provided through regular sports competitions and competitive events with other special schools across a wide area, visits to recreational venues and visitors to the school.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. Students' success in the classroom is based on an outstanding combination of high expectations and respectful, secure relationships. Lessons are full of intellectual challenge, interesting practical activities and strategies to ensure that students can succeed both in external examinations and in the development of their personal lives. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used extensively by staff to provide a strong visual element to learning, and the walls of classrooms and corridors celebrate students' work and successes with high quality displays. Students, who have all experienced difficulties with their behaviour and relationships in the past, demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. They talk with pride about the progress they are making in, for example, improving their reading skills and achieving good examination grades. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, equally importantly, know how to present their subjects in ways which engage and motivate their students. Behaviour management is not a noticeable feature of most lessons as students show respect for staff and interest in their learning activities. On those occasions when individuals find it difficult to manage their emotions and to respond

positively to the expectations of the classroom, staff intervene expertly with consistent strategies to provide alternative arrangements to enable students to re-adjust and re-engage effectively with classroom expectations. In addition, there is an effective programme of one-to-one teaching which enables individual students to focus particularly on improving their literacy and numeracy skills. The high quality of relationships and consistent teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants make an impressive contribution to the creation of an effective environment for learning.

Arrangements for the assessment and recording of students' progress have been the focus of intensive development and are now outstanding. The school produces a wealth of valuable information about students' academic progress and social development, starting with baseline testing of literacy and numeracy on entry to the school. This is a cooperative venture to which subject teachers, the learning and behaviour support teams and senior staff contribute great energy and commitment. A major key to the school's success is the manner in which this information is increasingly being used to support teachers' planning, reviews of individual progress and an understanding of how high expectations can be successfully implemented. Teachers' confidence in the use of assessment grade criteria and the use of data to monitor progress is developing appropriately. However, analysis of improving student grades in comparison with their baseline results on entry is not yet consistently embedded across all subjects. The regular class conferences are an inspirational mechanism for communicating up-to-date progress data and positive expectations about how individual student's lives can be turned around. An effective 'traffic light' system is used to enable students and staff to continuously monitor progress with learning.

As a result of the outstanding community of learning which has been established, students overall make good progress; for a number, the extent of their progress is outstanding. The Year 11 students who left the school in summer 2011 met or exceeded expected levels of progress in GCSE English, mathematics and science. A very large majority of the leavers progressed to further education courses in a variety of colleges. For a minority of students, results could have been even better if consistently good attendance had been maintained. Attendance of the current cohort of students shows significant improvement.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. Students enter the school with a variety of negative previous experiences and attitudes towards education. The school successfully turns around the self-image and expectations of the great majority of its students. Students in Years 10 and 11 demonstrate a commendable ability to reflect on their previous attitudes and behaviour and explicitly state that they have matured and progressed since joining the school. One student summed up the quality of the school's provision with the statement, 'This school has properly changed my life'. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding and is characterised by respect and

cooperation. Students who still have occasional difficulties with managing their emotions are helped to identify and overcome the barriers to their success in school. A very large majority of students stated in their questionnaires that they enjoy school. Students' attendance has improved this year and good strategies have been introduced to manage any cases of poor attendance. External multi-agency teams work collaboratively with the school to address the needs of families and individual students in areas such as youth offending, smoking cessation and health concerns.

A well-conceived rewards system is appreciated and respected by students and results in opportunities to take part in appropriate social and recreational activities. Good strategies to develop self-awareness and social skills, such as through personal tutorials and the recently introduced house groups make a strong contribution to the students' ability to identify positively with the school's strong sense of community. Students take an active part in collections for charity and contribute effectively to the work of the school council. Students are provided with good opportunities to understand British services and institutions and the nature of diversity in society through good courses in PSHCE and religious education. A stable staff and effective pastoral team underpin the high quality of provision for students' personal development and their preparation for life in the wider community.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is outstanding. Policies and procedures for the welfare and safety of students are implemented in an exemplary manner. Arrangements for safeguarding students are thorough and comprehensive. Annual updates for all staff on the procedures for child protection, together with up-to-date training at the required level for three members of staff as designated persons for child protection, ensure that all are able to respond immediately to any concerns. Students acknowledge that the school helps them to understand how to enjoy healthy and safe lifestyles through a number of themes in the curriculum. Premises and fire risk assessments are used as working documents with immediate attention to any shortfalls, supplemented with an appropriate range of routine checks on all aspects of fire safety. Admission and attendance registers are accurate and up to date, and the school has produced a three-year plan to increase access in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The school's attention to these requirements in ensuring students' welfare is firmly underpinned by the school's points record and reward system, thorough debriefing on any incidents and an awareness by students they are cared for individually by all staff.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has completed all the required checks on the suitability of staff and proprietors and all checks are recorded in an appropriate single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation provide suitable facilities and a safe, welcoming environment for learning. Classrooms are of appropriate size and include good

specialist facilities for science, art, cookery and ICT. Students make good use of the external play space, regularly taking exercise during breaks.

Provision of information

Appropriate and up-to-date information is provided for parents and carers. An attractive prospectus is supplemented annually by updated information, including the results of public examinations. The prospectus makes clear to parents and carers that they may request copies of all the required policies from the school.

Comprehensive annual reports on students' progress are sent home to parents and carers, and the school contributes effectively to the review of students' statements of special educational needs. An annual account of income and expenditure is provided for placing local authorities.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has appropriate and fair arrangements for the management of any complaints.

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 points for development:

- embed the procedures for the assessment and recording of students' progress consistently across the school by:
 - ensuring that all teachers are confident in applying the grade descriptors in their subjects
 - undertaking an analysis of progress against information on attainment on entry as a regular activity in all subjects.

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special (Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties)		
Date school opened	1995		
Age range of pupils	11–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 28	Girls: 11	Total: 39
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 28	Girls: 11	Total: 39
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 4	Girls: 5	Total: 9
Annual fees (day pupils)	£29,993		
Address of school	Preston Road Chorley Lancashire PR6 7AX		
Telephone number	01257 230894		
Email address	admin@waterbolodge.co.uk		
Headteacher	Julie Taylor		
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education		

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 Waterloo Lodge, Chorley, PR6 7AX

Thank you for your welcome to your school when we visited recently. We enjoyed our visit very much and are particularly grateful to you for taking the time to talk to us and to complete the questionnaires. The inspection judged that Waterloo Lodge provides you with an outstanding quality of education and provision for your personal development. We were particularly pleased to see:

- that your questionnaires show that you enjoy school, feel safe and appreciate the quality of teaching you receive
- the very high quality of respect and courtesy which you show to your staff and to visitors
- the outstanding way in which you concentrate on your work and take an active part in all your lessons
- the outstanding quality of teaching and the way in which staff plan lessons to meet every student's needs
- the progress you make with your reading and writing and the success which you achieve in examinations.

To make sure that the school continues to provide you with a high quality of education, we have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that they check your progress regularly in comparison with the standard of your work on entry to the school. You can continue to make the school successful by making sure you all attend regularly, continue to respect your teachers and take part in lessons in a mature way.

Yours sincerely

David Young
Lead inspector