

# Liberty Lodge

Independent school standard inspection report

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|-------------------------------|---------------------|
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| Reporting inspector           | Heather Yaxley HMI  |

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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>

## **Information about the school**

Liberty Lodge is owned and run by a single person under the proprietorship of Able Health Care Limited and provides education for students at their children's home. Each student has a statement of special educational needs in relation to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school opened in September 2010 and was registered in October 2010 to admit up to six students between the ages of 11 and 16 years. Since opening, two students have attended the school. There is currently one student on roll who is a boarder in the children's home. Liberty Lodge occupies a large Victorian house in an urban location. Central to the school's ethos is 'the philosophy of living and learning together.' The school is led by a senior teacher, who is also the classteacher, and who started at the school in May 2011.

This is the first inspection of Liberty Lodge and this report covers the quality of educational provision provided at the school. A welfare inspection of the children's home was carried out in July 2011, when boarding received an overall quality rating of good with three national minimum standards not met at that time. A copy of that inspection report is published on Ofsted's website. The children's home was not part of this inspection of the school.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Liberty Lodge provides a satisfactory standard of education, welfare, health and safety. The school works in tandem with the children's home, providing a consistent approach to students' welfare and education over each 24-hour period. The school maintains its own identity, with high expectations on students to learn and make progress. In the relatively short period of time since opening, the staff have established firm foundations from which to develop the provision. All but one of the regulations not met at the time of the pre-registration visit are now met and a total of five regulations are not met this time. This includes the requirement to update the training for the designated person for child protection. However, all other safeguarding requirements are suitably met.

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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).

## Quality of education

The overall quality of education is satisfactory and successfully enables students to remain purposefully engaged in learning. As a result, students make satisfactory progress, particularly in the areas that they are most interested in. Working in short bursts on short topics and units of work helps students to complete tasks and begin to take pride in what they accomplish. Often making up for gaps in their learning, students are sometimes reluctant to show what they can do but curricular arrangements and teaching strategies successfully help them to start to complete work independently and to take the risk of making mistakes.

The curriculum is satisfactory. With the exception of careers education, where there is a policy but no appropriate careers programme, and personal, social and health education where no suitable policy exists and provision lacks coherence and structure, appropriate schemes of work are in place. Overall, the school provides suitably flexible curriculum frameworks for teachers to plan activities that suit students' individual needs and interests. Subject policies are in place but not all make clear the most important things that students need to learn, given their particular complex needs. English, mathematics and science have priority on the timetable and there is some opportunity for students to plan when other subjects are taught each week. This works well to encourage students' attendance and active participation in learning. Opportunities to gain nationally accredited qualifications are limited but have developed over the past year with some Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards and GCSE science qualifications being followed. Given the small nature of the school, the senior teacher has appropriate plans in place to investigate how the curriculum can be broadened through contact with local schools and colleges.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory, with strengths in teaching and weaknesses in assessment. Behaviour management is good, characterised by consistently high expectations within a sensitive, professional relationship with students. This enables learning to proceed in a relaxed, orderly and supportive atmosphere. The teacher's plans take good account of the subject matter and, as the students work through activities, the teacher gains a good understanding of what they know and can do. However, because the plans do not focus sufficiently on students' particular targets for learning and personal development, opportunities are missed for students to practise and celebrate their accomplishments with regard to the objectives specified in their individual plans. In addition, these individual plans exist in various forms across education and boarding welfare and do not provide a coherent set of shared targets for the 24-hour curriculum. It is therefore, difficult to track students' attainment and progress over time.

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, including their behaviour. When in school, students enjoy their lessons and take good advantage of what is on offer but poor attendance reduces the amount of progress made. In response to consistent strategies to manage behaviour and good role-

models from adults, students' behaviour improves. Opportunities to follow topics of interest develop their understanding and appreciation of the wider world and educational visits encourage students to appreciate how others in society live and behave. Such work helps students gain an understanding of their own and other cultures that promotes tolerance and harmony. Students are sometimes reluctant to go out or, when they do, some find it difficult to act responsibly. But understanding what is right and what is wrong develops over time, as does their trust in adults to support them. Understanding public services and institutions develops as students take advantage of local facilities and amenities, such as the library and swimming pool.

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

The school's attention to students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school benefits from shared policies for the 24-hour boarding and welfare provision for students. The senior teacher implements the policies for safeguarding children and for health and safety in accordance with education and welfare procedures. Risk assessments are reviewed appropriately; health and safety checks made regularly and records for students and staff are in good order. These things successfully support students' behaviour as well as their safety and the well-being of others. The proprietor is actively involved in keeping up to date with what is happening and how well things are going and this contributes to the monitoring of the welfare provision. Relationships between the senior teacher and care staff are mutually supportive in celebrating students' successes as well as taking appropriate action when things are not going so well. For example, the boarding staff and proprietor place high importance on students attending school each day and when students do not attend there are consequences for evening activities. The 24-hour points system reflects students' achievements.

Since the pre-registration visit, the school has established a three-year plan to improve the curriculum and premises in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and has revised the first aid policy to meet regulatory requirements. This satisfactory policy now makes reference to medical emergencies actions but does not give specific examples that might be helpful. Similarly, the adequate anti-bullying policy does not make specific reference to some forms of bullying that can be addressed through the curriculum. The designated person for child protection has undertaken child protection training in the past, but it has not been refreshed within the required two year period. The training is booked for early December 2011.

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

Thorough recruitment and vetting procedures are in place for staff and others, and the necessary information is well recorded in the single central record and in personnel files.

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

The maintenance and modern décor of rooms used for education match the high standard in the children's home. The classrooms and their separate access, provide

discrete accommodation for the school day, suitably reinforcing the importance of education and the separate identity of the school. Two classrooms provide sufficient space for teaching and successfully present an environment that is conducive to, and supportive of learning and to keep students safe and secure. Students have access to a small but increasing range of resources. There is safe access to the internet. The senior teacher places high importance on good quality, age-appropriate resources that will interest and engage students. A large garden provides safe opportunities for students at breaktimes and there is adequate outdoor space for play and recreation. It is used for curricular projects but is not suitable for physical education. Local facilities provide good opportunities for sport.

## **Provision of information**

At the time of the pre-registration visit, some of the regulations for the provision of information were not met. All but one of the regulations are now met. The school provides details to local authorities for the income received and expenditure incurred in respect of each student, and most of the information about the school's policies and procedures is now available on the website and in the brochure. Although the website has policies available through its links, anyone relying on a printed copy of the brochure, does not have information about what kind of information is available on request. In both the brochure and on the website, there is no mention of the availability of past academic performance or the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure in the preceding school year.

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

Since the pre-registration visit, the school has ensured that the complaints procedure now meets all regulatory requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that the curriculum policy is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, particularly for personal, social, health and careers education, and that they are implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1))
- provide a planned programme for students' personal, social and health education to reflect the school's aims and ethos (paragraph 2(2)(f))

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

- provide appropriate careers guidance (paragraph 2(2)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State by providing the designated person for child protection with the required level of training (paragraph 7).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- make available particulars of academic performance, including the results of any public examinations, and details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and ensure that the printed version of the brochure informs parents and parents of prospective students of the availability of the required information or document including the form in which it is available (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

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

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

- make better use of assessments and students' targets to inform teaching and facilitate tracking of their attainment and progress
- further develop opportunities for nationally recognised accreditations and qualifications
- ensure that all policies reflect the particular needs of the students.

## Inspection judgements

|             |      |              |            |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

### 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 |  |  | ✓ |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|



## School details

|   |   |          |          |
|---|---|----------|----------|
| <b>School status</b>  | Independent special school as part of a children's home                         |          |          |
| <b>Type of school</b>   | Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties |          |          |
| <b>Date school opened</b>   | 1 September 2010  |          |          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>  | 11–16 years   |          |          |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>   | Mixed   |          |          |
| <b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>                              | Boys: 1   | Girls: 0 | Total: 1 |
| <b>Number of boarders</b>   | Boys: 1   | Girls: 0 | Total: 1 |
| <b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b> | Boys: 1   | Girls: 0 | Total: 1 |
| <b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>                          | Boys: 1   | Girls: 0 | Total: 1 |
| <b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>   | £164,400 to £197,600  |          |          |
| <b>Email address</b>  | Joanna.gardner@libertybodge.com   |          |          |
| <b>Headteacher</b>  | Joanna Gardner (senior teacher)   |          |          |
| <b>Proprietor</b>   | Able Health Care Limited  |          |          |

**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.**



18 November 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Liberty Lodge**

It was a pleasure to meet with you when I inspected your school recently. Thank you for talking to me, for showing me your work in class and the projects that you have done in the garden. Thank you too for teaching me to play Yahtzee, although I am not sure that I will ever be as good a player as you.

I am writing to tell you know that I have judged that your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. It is good to see how well you are working with Joanna and I know that she is working hard to make lessons interesting. It is also good to see how well Joanna works with the rest of the staff so that you can do as well as possible. All of the adults working with you know how important it is for you to get a good education so that you are ready for college or work and we all want you to attend school every day. But sometimes you do not attend well and this is a shame because there are always good things for you to learn and do in class.

As always, there are things that can improve and I have asked Joanna and others to look at how they can use the targets from your individual plans to make sure that you have more opportunities to achieve them. I would also like to see more opportunities for examinations and certificates, like the one that you completed recently for Sports and Fitness. The school also needs to provide you with a planned programme for personal, social, health and careers education. Your teacher must attend additional child protection training and ensure that parents and others receive all the required information about the school.

There is a full report on what I found out and perhaps you could look at it to see more details. Thank you again for your help and I wish you well in the rest of your time at Liberty Lodge and for all your future plans.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley  
Her Majesty's Inspector