

Lord's Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	350/6000
Unique Reference Number (URN)	105269
Inspection number	406910
Inspection dates	1–2 November 2012
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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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

The school is a co-educational independent day school which provides for up to 100 students between the ages of 11 and 18 years. It currently has 19 students on roll. A small number of students are in the school's sixth form. Most students are of White British heritage. Approximately one third of students originate from Asian, Pakistani and other heritages. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs. The school is located in the centre of Bolton. It was founded as a commercial college in 1906 and became a secondary school in 1975. The school has been owned by Bridgeman Independent Education Ltd since August 2012. It was last fully inspected in September 2008. The school moved from its original premises in Bolton to its current location in April 2011. The school received a material change visit in September 2011.

The school aims to: reach the highest standards of attainment; develop self-confidence, independence and adaptability; develop respect for others and the environment; help students feel safe; and provide a stimulating and supportive learning environment, teaching of the highest standard and a caring and secure place of learning.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education, meets its aims well and has improved well since the last inspection by addressing the regulatory shortcomings identified and improving the provision for students' personal development. The curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students well. The good teaching helps students to make good progress. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this is a significant factor in the students' outstanding behaviour. The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety and safeguarding of students. The school meets all but one of the regulations for continued registration as an independent school.

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

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

Quality of education

All parents and carers who expressed a view, were highly satisfied with the quality of education provided. The curriculum and other activities are good and meet the range of needs and interests of students effectively. The school provides well for all groups including boys and girls and those from different cultural heritages and ages. The school provides good experiences for students in all the required areas of learning. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and prepares students for the GCSE. There are suitable policies and schemes of work for all of the subjects taught. The schemes of work and lesson planning enable students of all abilities to make progress. There are many opportunities for students to develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in different lessons. For example, in a science lesson students learning about the human digestive system were given specific instructions on the style and standards of written work expected.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is a major strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to learning. Opportunities are well taken by teachers to promote students' personal development through lessons and extra-curricular activities. Lunch and after-school activities although limited, support learning positively. Educational visits and visitors enrich learning. For example, school trips have included those to a science museum, a performing arts college and places of cultural interest. Visitors to school include a barrister and nurse who regularly give talks about their areas of expertise. This supports students' learning well, for example, regarding public institutions and services and the law.

Careers education is provided for older students and the school has effective links with the Connexions service. There are also positive links with local colleges and employers regarding work experience and vocational skills development. Students say that they value highly the opportunities to visit local colleges of further education as this helps them to make decisions about further education.

Teaching and assessment are good. This helps students to make good progress. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to engage students and use effective teaching methods. Behaviour management is excellent. A good example of these features was seen in a lesson on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The teacher led a discussion about the characters and events very effectively. Students read out passages from the play with good, expressive voices and later worked very effectively in pairs to develop their understanding of different characters' motivation for their actions. Basic skills in literacy, mathematics and ICT are taught well. Teachers have a good awareness of students' prior attainment and needs. Lesson planning is satisfactory. However, students are occasionally uncertain about the expected learning outcomes for each lesson. Classroom resources are of satisfactory quality and these are adequately used to support learning. The pace of work in lessons is usually good and this ensures that students get through much work.

Students are given a thorough assessment of their prior attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT skills when they join the school. This information is

used well to plan teaching. Teachers check and record the progress students make in each lesson effectively and provide feedback to students regularly. However, although the marking of workbooks is satisfactory overall, opportunities are occasionally missed to set future learning targets. School records and all the evidence indicate that progress over time is generally good.

Students achieve well in light of their capability and starting points. They develop a range of skills well, including in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Most students gain a good number of passes in different subjects and good grades in GCSE examinations in light of their attainment on entry to the school. These factors ensure that students are well prepared for their future economic well-being. Most school leavers go on to sixth form or further education in the area.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students enjoy school life very much as demonstrated by their outstanding behaviour and attitudes. Students' consistently thoughtful behaviour is a significant factor in their learning and makes an excellent contribution to the school's ethos. The students make very good progress in developing the personal qualities that will enable them to contribute very effectively to the community and to become very responsible adults and citizens. The school is a harmonious community. Students say that students and staff are 'like a family'. Relationships at all levels, including between different racial and cultural groups, are excellent.

Students are treated with respect at all times and nurtured as individuals. This helps them to develop their self-esteem and confidence very well. Teachers take every opportunity to promote moral development through PSHCE, general studies and other lessons. For example, racism was recently discussed in a moral context when students studied *Of Mice and Men* in English literature.

Social development is excellent. It is nurtured through very well planned opportunities to help students to learn about the value of relationships. Students play their part in improving school life through the school council. Students often support people in the wider community through their fund-raising for charities and good causes. There are many opportunities for cultural development. Students learn much about their own culture and the beliefs, values and customs of others. They value highly the rich diversity of cultures in modern Britain and show high levels of tolerance and respect towards others. There is good provision for students to learn about public institutions. For example, students are able to learn about parliament, democracy and the law. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision to promote the overall welfare, health and safety of students is good. Staff are highly committed to ensuring students' well-being and are provided with clear guidance regarding their roles and responsibilities. All of the required policies and

procedures are in place and are implemented effectively. These include policies relating to anti-bullying, welfare, health and safety of students on school trips, behaviour and child protection. The policies are detailed and reviewed regularly. Child protection procedures are robust. The designated officer and all staff are trained at the required level. A suitable safer recruitment policy is in place. The school's behaviour policy is very effective and students value the 'treats' on offer for good achievement, outstanding behaviour and good attendance.

The school carries out good quality health and safety risk assessments for the premises and students' activities both on and off the school site. Fire risk assessments are carried out regularly, evacuation drills are undertaken as required and fire prevention equipment is also checked regularly. Staff are highly vigilant throughout the school day regarding health and safety and ensure the proper supervision of students as they work and play. Students say that they are well cared for and feel safe in school. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles by eating healthily and participate in sports. A nurse visits the school regularly and supports PSHCE well by giving talks on various health related matters. Admission and attendance registers are kept in accordance with the requirements.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required checks, including criminal records bureau checks, to confirm the suitability of the proprietor and staff, are carried out and meet requirements. The school maintains a single central register as is required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's accommodation provides a satisfactory and safe environment for learning. The building is large and spacious. The school has wide corridors, a wide central stairwell and adequate classroom space for the age range and number of students that the school is registered for. The school has a well-equipped ICT suite which is connected to the internet and well used to support learning. There are separate rooms for prayers and music. The school has a good-sized hall that is well used for learning and play. The previous inspection identified that there was no outdoor space for students to play. The school has remedied this by making use of a park that is situated very close by. There was also concern at the last inspection regarding the suitability of the facilities for students who may become ill. These facilities now meet requirements. However, the standard of decoration around many areas of the school including classrooms and toilets is inadequate because much of the paintwork is very old and flaking away from walls and ceilings.

Provision of information

The school provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information for parents and carers. Information includes that contained in the school's brochure and on the school website. The school provides parents and carers with annual reports written

on students' progress. These are appropriately detailed and informative regarding students' attainment, progress and personal development.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedures and policy meet all the 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 the one stated below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration in all parts of the school (paragraph 23 (p)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure that students are always made aware of the expected learning outcomes for each lesson by sharing these with students at the outset.
- Ensure that teachers take every opportunity to set future learning targets in students' workbooks to help them to achieve as well as they can.

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 day		
Type of school	Secondary		
Date school opened	1906		
Age range of pupils	11–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 13	Girls: 6	Total: 19
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,800 - £6,000		
Address of school	Commerce House Bridgeman Place Bolton Lancashire BL2 1DW		
Telephone number	01204 523731		
Email address	info@lordsschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Ainsworth		
Proprietor	Mrs Anne Ainsworth (Bridgeman Independent Education Ltd)		

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.



5 November 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Lords Independent School, BL2 1DW

Firstly, my thanks to all of you for the discussions we had and your general cooperation with the inspection. I promised to write to you about what I found out about your school when I had finished the inspection.

The school provides a good quality of education for you. The teaching is good, the work in lessons is well presented by teachers, the pace of work is good and basic skills in literacy, mathematics and the development of computer skills are well taught. These factors help you to make good progress. The curriculum that your school offers is good. You told me that the stimulating opportunities help you to enjoy your learning and prepare you well for the future. I was very pleased to hear about your career aspirations and the qualifications that some of you want to obtain.

Your personal development and your behaviour are outstanding. The teachers take good care of you. They work hard to make sure you develop healthy and safe lifestyles. The staff are keen to make the school even better. With regard to the accommodation I have asked the school to improve the painting and decoration around school. Regarding teaching I have asked that teachers always share with you details about what they expect you to learn in each lesson at the start of lessons. Also, marking your workbooks can be improved by teachers taking every opportunity to set future learning targets for you. You can help the school by carrying on working as hard as you do.

I know that everyone is very proud of your achievements. Well done. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Saleem Hussain
Lead Inspector