

Lawrence House

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	340/6001
Unique Reference Number (URN)	136752
Inspection number	393247
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2012
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



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

This independent special school was registered in May 2011. Lawrence House is a small school and provides for students in the age range of 11 to 18 years with complex needs, including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school accepts students who may or may not have a statement of special educational needs. Presently, none of the students has a statement and none is aged over 16. All of the students have had large gaps in their education caused by prolonged absence and/or exclusion from previous schools. Some students may be on roll at the school for short periods, whereas others may stay for longer. All students live in residential accommodation owned by the company.

The school aims to: 'provide holistic, high quality professional care and support ... and a fair, equitable and secure environment for young people to develop their own resilience, self-respect and skills'. The school emphasises personal development within the principles of 'Every Child Matters'. It has no particular religious affiliation. This is the school's first inspection. The school has experienced a considerable turnover in leadership since it registered.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. The school meets its aims sufficiently well. The satisfactory curriculum and teaching ensure that students make satisfactory progress in their academic learning and personal development. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory as is their behaviour. The school makes good provision in promoting the welfare, health and safety and the safeguarding of students. The school meets all of the independent school regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum and other activities are satisfactory and meet students' needs and interests adequately. The curriculum is broad and balanced, providing sufficiently for students' academic and personal development. There are suitable policies and schemes of work for most subjects of the National Curriculum and the school

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

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

provides appropriate experiences for students in all the required areas of learning. Plans and schemes of work are carefully customised to meet students' individual needs and this helps them to make satisfactory progress over time. Older students undertake GCSE courses of study according to their abilities and interests. Staff have recently been trained to deliver short units of work within the 'Open Awards' accreditation scheme so that students have more opportunities to gain qualifications. The scheme is to be implemented very soon. There are good opportunities for students to develop their basic skills in literacy. The school provides satisfactorily for students to develop numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. These factors help students to prepare satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. Discussions with students make it clear that they enjoy the real-life and practically based learning experiences the most. For example, students were very enthusiastic about planning a forthcoming educational visit with their teachers during a literacy lesson.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is wide-ranging. For example, focal points include relationships, drugs education, programmes to raise self-esteem and work around the avoidance of peer pressure. This reflects the school's aims of empowering students to develop resilience and self-respect. Approaches taken in the residential setting ensure that students receive additional opportunities for PSHCE skills development after school.

Students enjoy a satisfactory range of educational visits that support their learning. For example, they visit a library regularly to develop their research and independent learning skills. Positive ties have developed with a charitable group which encourages students to think about the community and the difference they can make to it by getting involved in supportive voluntary activities. Visitors to school make similar contributions to students' learning and include health practitioners for example, giving talks regarding sexual health matters.

The school has positive ties with the Connexions service to support personal development and careers education. There are suitable arrangements to provide young people with an insight into the world of work, including work experience.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall, helping students to make satisfactory progress. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the students' special educational needs. Learning activities are suitably matched to students' ages, prior attainment and needs. Teachers take every opportunity to promote the development of basic literacy skills in different lessons. This works well and most students make good progress in their reading as a result. However, opportunities are lost in lessons where there is scope to develop numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics. Classroom resources are of good quality and used well to support learning. The pace of work is satisfactory. Teachers manage behaviour well and this ensures that students develop positive attitudes to learning, stay on task and apply effort in their work. Although lessons are satisfactorily planned, students are not always told what learning outcomes are expected from the outset. Consequently, they do not evaluate their own work as well as they could.

Students are given a thorough initial assessment of their prior attainment, including in their basic skills of literacy and numeracy, when they start school. This information is used satisfactorily to plan induction periods for students and teaching generally. Teachers discuss students' progress with them at the end of each day. Tests take place at regular intervals so that performance can be monitored. Students' workbooks are marked regularly and provide students with useful feedback on how to improve.

Students make satisfactory gains in their learning over time when set against their starting points and previous lack of engagement in education due to poor attendance or exclusion. Records of achievement for students demonstrate that most make satisfactory progress while a small number make good progress. Notably, a number of students return to mainstream education after only a short period at this school because of its good care, support and guidance.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is satisfactory overall. The school's careful, nurturing approach ensures that students raise their self-esteem and confidence. Consequently, students feel highly valued as individuals and this helps them to increasingly enjoy school life. Students are given much praise and reward for their attendance, positive behaviour and achievements. They value the rewards that they receive and this motivates them to make much effort in their learning. Approaches taken in the residential setting make a significant contribution to personal development.

Students develop a satisfactory understanding of right and wrong through PSHCE and other lessons. For example, they consider topics such as racial discrimination in history in a moral context. Staff provide positive role-models for students to base their social development and relationships with others. There are also a number of opportunities for students to interact with the wider community, including through educational visits, visitors and engaging in voluntary work.

The school provides satisfactorily for students to develop awareness of their own and other cultures through work in PSHCE, history and geography. Cultural harmony and tolerance is satisfactorily promoted. Students are aware of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain and show respect for the faiths, customs and values of others. For example, students speak knowledgeably about major faiths.

There is satisfactory provision for students to learn about public institutions. For example, there are a number of opportunities in the curriculum to learn about the legal, education and welfare services.

Behaviour is satisfactory and the school is an orderly community. Students develop a sense of responsibility for their own behaviour as their appreciation of how their actions affect others grows. They come to terms with issues like anger management

through the staff's good care, support and guidance. Students' generally positive attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around school make a significant contribution to the school's family ethos. Students make significant improvement in their attendance levels when compared to their former schools, and develop a pattern of regular attendance. Although the attendance of most students is good, a small number do not attend as well as others. Punctuality is satisfactory.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision to promote the welfare, health, safety and safeguarding of students is good. All of the required policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively. They are well detailed and provide good guidance to staff about the school's procedures and their individual responsibilities. The policies and procedures are reviewed regularly by the proprietor and senior managers. The school has robust policies in place for safeguarding. The designated officer for child protection and all staff are trained to the required levels.

Detailed risk assessments are carried out regularly to identify and manage potential risks to the students' safety on and off the premises. The school has an effective internet safety policy and students are provided with suitable guidance about the dangers of the inappropriate use of ICT and how to avoid any form of exploitation. Fire risk assessments are carried out regularly. Fire safety equipment is tested periodically and everyone takes part in regular fire drills with appropriate records being kept. The premises comply with all health and safety requirements. As a result, students feel safe in school and say that they are confident that they can turn to adults if they experience any problems. Students are pleased with how well staff encourage them to develop healthy lifestyles through work in PSHCE and regular opportunities to take part in activities such as swimming and horse riding.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required checks, including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, to confirm the suitability of the proprietor and staff, are carried out and meet requirements. The school maintains a single central register of these checks, as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school operates from a semi-detached house in a quiet residential area. The accommodation enables students to be taught effectively and safely. The building is well maintained and decorated. The school has an adequately sized classroom. This includes two computers connected to the internet which are often used to support learning. Other areas of the house, such as the living area, are also used to 'spread out' when a little more space is required or a more relaxed setting is desirable. There are appropriate facilities for students who fall ill. Outdoors, there is an adequately sized garden area which offers opportunities for physical education and recreation.

Local facilities, such as sports centres and parks, are well used to support the provision of physical education.

Provision of information

The school provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information for parents and carers. The school provides detailed reports about the progress and attainment of students as required. These include much information about how well students are doing in developing their skills in the key areas of learning, both academic and personal.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedures comply with 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 points for development.

- Provide more real-life and practically based learning opportunities for students.
- Provide more opportunities for students to develop their numeracy skills in different lessons.
- Ensure that students are always made aware of the expected learning outcomes for each lesson by sharing these with students at the start.
- Ensure that all students attend well by exploring additional strategies to promote good attendance in individual cases.

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

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school for students with complex needs, including behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
Date school opened	May 2011		
Age range of pupils	11–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 2	Total: 2
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: 2	Total: 2
Annual fees	£29,250 – £39,000		
Headteacher	Barbara Valentine		
Proprietor	Anthony Nolan (QTC 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.



16 November 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Lawrence House School

My thanks to you for the discussions we had and your helpfulness throughout the inspection. I promised to write to you about what I found out about your school when I had finished the inspection.

Your school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The curriculum is satisfactory. This helps you to make satisfactory progress in your learning and personal development. The school provides you with good opportunities to develop your basic literacy skills in many different lessons. I have asked the staff to take the same approach in teaching mathematics. You told me that you liked learning through real-life and practical learning experiences. I have asked the school to provide you with more of this. Teaching is satisfactory and learning resources like computers are well used by teachers to help you make progress. 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.

Your personal development and your behaviour are satisfactory. The teachers take good care of you. They help you to develop healthy and safe lifestyles. I was pleased to see how well the school is helping you to enjoy school life and to prepare for the future. A small number of you do not attend well and everyone wants you to improve this. If you are one of those students whose attendance is not as good as it could be, please make sure you improve.

I know that everyone is pleased with all your hard work. Well done. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Saleem Hussain
Lead Inspector