

Lewis Charlton School

North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, LE65 1HU

Inspection dates

16 April 2013

Context of the inspection

This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.

The school had a full inspection in July 2012 where, although it was judged to provide a good quality of education and the overall effectiveness of its residential provision was satisfactory, its provision for the welfare, health and safety of students was inadequate. A significant number of regulations were not met. These were in relation to students' welfare, health and safety, the suitability of the proprietor, staff and supply staff, the school's premises and accommodation and the provision of information. A number of national minimum standards for residential special schools were also unmet.

The school's action plan was evaluated and accepted in November 2012, although some improvement was needed. This monitoring inspection was carried out by an education and a social care inspector.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Good progress

At the time of the inspection in July 2012 a number of regulations related to the welfare, health and safety of students were not met. Although the school had devised adequate child protection policies and procedures, they were not consistently followed and the reporting of safeguarding concerns lacked the required rigour, with poor record keeping that did not provide an account of the decision making process or of conversations with external professionals. The school's policies to counter bullying did not comply with the current guidance. The implementation of the school's policy on the health and safety of students on educational visits was insufficient and, in relation to fire safety, a known fire hazard had not been remedied and procedures for monitoring fire safety were inadequate. The school was not able to demonstrate awareness of its responsibility to inform the Independent Safeguarding Authority if a member of staff was to be disciplined or dismissed due to unsuitability to work with children. Aspects of the information that the school was required to provide for parents, carers and others were not available. A number of national minimum standards for residential special schools were unmet. These related to safeguarding, the storage and administration of medication, the review of instances of physical intervention and the monitoring of staff training. There were also shortfalls in the provision for staff appraisal, in the coverage of issues by visits to the residential provision by an independent person and in the provision of information through the headteacher's reporting. In addition, a standard was not met because the school's efforts to enhance the security of students on its main site by erecting a new external gate had the unforeseen consequence of restricting students' liberty.

Following the inspection, the school devised an action plan that provided a suitable framework for directing and monitoring its efforts to remedy the failings in regulations and standards that had been identified. It reviewed and improved a number of policies and procedures in both education and residential provision and members of staff undertook further training.

For instance, the child protection policy has been reviewed and revised and now contains clear guidance relating to thorough reporting of all actions taken including their chronology and details of all contacts with external professionals. Additional senior staff members have received the advanced level training as designated child protection officers. This has enabled the school to assign a designated child protection officer to each of the school's four sites and to ensure that the rigour and effectiveness of the responses to concerns or child protection issues are monitored for completeness and consistency by a suitably trained person. Procedures are supported and enhanced by the use of new computer software that retains and makes available details of all contacts and interventions with external professionals. The school's anti-bullying policies now comply with current guidance and in particular provide for a useful range of activities to help students to understand, and to avoid, cyber-bullying.

The school's approach to protecting the students' health and safety has been enhanced by additional training for two senior staff members. This has resulted in new and effective procedures being introduced to assess the risks associated with specific activities and facilities. These include detailed risk assessments associated with each individual student. The way these are used significantly supports students' health and safety on educational trips and visits. The fire hazard that was identified at the last inspection has now been rectified and a new process for monitoring the fire risk action plans for each of the school's buildings is in place.

The school is now fully aware of its duties in relation to the Independent Safeguarding Authority and its safeguarding policy has been amended to reflect this. All the required information for parents, carers and others is now provided or made available through the new school prospectus or via the website that has been substantially revised.

The national minimum standards for residential special schools are now met in full. Some of the standards that were not met at the time of the last inspection relate to issues that were identified in respect to the education provision, as recorded above. The other unmet standards have been addressed as follows.

The procedures for the administration of medication have been appropriately amended so that there is an effective policy to respond to occasions when medication comes into the school without suitable labelling. The software package referred to above in relation to child protection issues is also being effectively used to track incidents of inappropriate student behaviour and is providing staff with helpful information. This enables them to examine and identify trends and issues in students' behaviour.

Training for residential staff now includes the induction package from the Children's Workforce Development Council and staff members, including those who have been at the school for some time, report that they are benefitting from this. The school's new annual appraisal process for the whole staff team is in development and the first phase of meetings has now taken place. New arrangements for an independent visitor to monitor the residential provision have been put in place and have been improved by a recent

review. The head teacher's annual report to parents, published on the website, now adequately records the school's review of the operation and resourcing of the school's residential provision. The problem over restriction of the liberty of students at the gate at the main site has been remedied.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements

Inspection team

John Gush, lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Halliley

Social Care Inspector

Information about this school

- Lewis Charlton School is an independent special school catering for up to 47 students of both genders between 11 and 19 years of age. It has weekly boarding facilities for up to three 11 to 16 year old students and up to two students aged over 16 years. Currently there are 44 students on roll, three of whom are weekly boarders. The school is located over four sites, all within easy walking distance of each other and close to the centre of the Leicestershire market town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs that identifies behavioural, emotional and social difficulties as the primary concern. The students travel to the school from a number of boroughs across the central and East Midlands. Seven students are in the care of their local authority. The school's last full inspection by Ofsted was in July 2012 and the residential provision was last inspected at the same time. This report is of an integrated progress monitoring inspection of both the educational and residential provision.
- The school states that its primary aim is 'to re-engage pupils in the process of education so that they may become confident and successful learners who are able to access social and vocational opportunities and eventually take their place as responsible members of society.'

School details

Unique reference number	134438
Social care unique reference number	SC059033
Inspection number	421157
DfE registration number	855/6020
<p>This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.</p> <p>The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.</p>	
Type of school	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	11–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	3
Proprietor	Lewis Charlton Ltd
Headteacher	Georgina Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Annual fees (day pupils)	£43,152 to £59,850
Annual fees (boarders)	£79,490 to £87,926
Telephone number	01530 560775
Email address	enquiries@lewischarltonschool.org

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