

TLG—The Education Charity

Empress Road, Calcot, Reading, RG31 4XR

Inspection dates

12–14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

2

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------|---|
| Leadership and management | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- Students join with low attainment and successfully re-engage with learning.
- By the end of Year 11, virtually all students gain examination results which enable them to go onto college, training or employment.
- As a result of good teaching, students enjoy their learning, make good progress and achieve well.
- The safe environment helps students to feel safe and adopt positive behaviour.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This helps students to develop positive social attitudes.
- Staff work hard to help students appreciate that people have different views and beliefs. This helps prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Leadership is focused on raising standards. Leaders check the quality of teaching and the impact this has on students' achievement and learning. They ensure the school meets the independent school standards.
- Those responsible for governance, support and challenge leaders effectively. They help ensure that this is a good and improving school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Students receive too few opportunities to use the most recent computer technology.
- Teachers lack opportunities to work alongside mainstream colleagues to develop their skills.
- The centre does not yet have its own website to support students, parents and carers.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule for The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, 'the independent school standards', and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice. Four lessons were observed, two of them jointly with TLG leaders, and the inspector talked with staff about the nature of teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the curriculum manager, the head of teaching and learning, the centre support manager and the key national leaders from TLG – The Education Charity. Meetings were also held with the proprietor and the senior pastor from the Reading Community Church, which first established the centre and which shares leadership and governance.
- Telephone discussions were held with representatives from schools who place students at the centre, or who receive students from it. Other discussions were held with representatives of children's services departments and a local businessman who provides support and opportunities for students.
- The views of parents and carers were gathered from four telephone conversations, since there were not enough responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, to trigger an analysis.
- The views of staff were gathered from discussions held throughout the inspection and from their completed staff questionnaires.
- The views of the students were gathered from discussions with them. Their work was observed in lessons and samples of written work completed over time looked at to provide evidence of progress. Detailed case studies enabled the inspector to gain evidence of the wider support and provision for students.
- The inspector checked compliance with the independent school standards. He looked at a range of written evidence, including data on the progress made by students, planning and assessment, the centre's self-evaluation and improvement planning. He also checked a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.
- Since the centre does not yet have its own website, a check was made of the brochure provided for parents and carers when an application is made to join to ensure that it contains full details of the centre's safeguarding policy and that it meets requirements.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- TLG – the Education Charity is an independent day school which is registered to admit up to 18 male and female students who have been, or who are at risk of being, excluded from a mainstream school. There are currently seven on roll.
- All students are disabled or have special educational needs and five have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and social care plan, specifying behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, often with associated complex needs.
- The school was first registered in March 2011 and its last inspection was in January 2012. It has a Christian ethos and the proprietor is Reading Community Church, acting as a charitable trust. It works in partnership with TLG – The Education Charity, which is a national Christian charity supporting a network of alternative education centres around the country.
- The school does not make any use of alternative provision and does not make early entries for examinations.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and teacher have been appointed, creating a new staff team. The centre's practice has also developed since that time and while students remain dual-registered, they are now more likely to attend the centre for four days a week, rather than the previous model of two days. This has been a response to meeting current identified needs from schools who place students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the opportunities for students to use laptops and hand-held tablet computers in order to undertake individual research and enhance their learning.
- Promote greater links between the centre and local mainstream schools by:
 - developing opportunities to enhance the curriculum through access to specialist facilities
 - creating more opportunities for staff training and development alongside colleagues from different settings, in order to gain a wide range of teaching approaches.
- Develop a website that can provide immediate support and direct links with the school for students and their families.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The central TLG Education Support Team supports and reinforces the effective leadership of the school. There is a clear vision and focus on re-engaging young people at risk of dropping out of education and through good teaching enabling them to behave and achieve well.
- The headteacher and his teacher colleague work very closely together, delivering lessons jointly. They plan carefully and are well supported by the central organisation, ensuring strong leadership of teaching. Monitoring is effective and links to a supportive system for setting targets for staff and training and development. Staff have clear objectives for development that link with the identified needs of the school. These are identified by rigorous self-evaluation which allows the organisation to prioritise areas for development effectively.
- Currently the two staff are not employed under teachers' pay and conditions. While their progress towards their agreed objectives is measured carefully on a termly basis, there is no direct link between their performance and pay. TLG's procedures allow for effective action to be taken to address any inadequate teaching and tackle underperformance should it become necessary.
- The curriculum is focused on promoting key skills in English, mathematics and computing. Students access a broad and balanced range of courses that also helps them acquire literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening skills. Opportunities to use portable forms of computer technology are currently limited. This restricts students' ability to undertake individual research and enhance their learning.
- Students are dual-registered, spending a day a week in their mainstream school or other settings determined by their individual learning plan.
- Recently developed links with mainstream colleagues have seen increased opportunities for students to benefit from the use of specialist facilities, such as those for science and physical education. This has started to enhance the curriculum that can be offered beyond the physical limitations of the accommodation at the school.
- Citizenship is taught as part of the programme of personal, social and health education. A lesson observed on what constitutes being British reflected a positive commitment to helping students realise that they live in a multicultural, multi-faith and multi-ethnic community. This helps students to accept that others might hold different, equally valid views and prepares them well for life in modern Britain as positive members of their community, accepting the rule of law.
- The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Social elements are particularly effective, helping students develop their ability to collaborate, share and support each other. Over time they develop much greater self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge.
- Great care is taken to ensure that each individual is well supported, ensuring equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling any discrimination.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all legal requirements and ensure the well-being of students. Since the school does not have its own website, parents and carers are made aware of this in a detailed brochure provided when an application to join the school is first made. Arrangements for the appointment of staff are rigorous and in line with the expectations of safer recruitment, and staff training is of high quality and up to date.
- Careers education is in place and reinforced through links with local businesses who work closely with the school and its students. The school gives good support for transition and since students become re-engaged with learning they go on to college, training or some form of employment.
- Links with local schools and children's services are good, maintaining positive approaches towards dual-placement or to supporting students in their wider family lives. The school ensures that it is represented at any meetings around the futures of its students and works well with professionals from other organisations. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the education and support given to their children.
- The premises provide for education that helps students make progress and enjoy their learning, even if they sometimes lack facilities for more specialist study. All required information is available for placing schools and local authorities. This includes details of the complaints procedure, which meets requirements.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. However, the lack of a school website restricts its impact in fostering links and communication with parents and carers.
- **The governance of the school:**
Those responsible for governance have full access to the data on the effectiveness of provision. They

have a detailed understanding of this, which they use effectively to gain a clear picture of the school's performance. This supports the good achievement of students and delivery of the curriculum. Frequent visits to the school ensure an accurate view of teaching and administration. This includes ensuring that statutory duties, including those around safeguarding, are carried out effectively. Care is taken to ensure effective financial administration underpins the functioning of the school. Challenging objectives are set for the headteacher and there is a clear understanding of the performance of other staff and how they are rewarded. There is a clear policy for tackling any underperformance, should it occur.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. When they first join, their behaviour is very challenging and on occasions it can continue to be so. Occasionally there are instances of behaviour that is silly rather than disruptive. However, there is an effective and consistently applied behaviour policy and over time students adopt much more positive attitudes. They develop greater resilience and take increasing responsibility for their own actions, coming to appreciate how this impacts on others.
- Students form very positive relationships with staff, who act as positive role models. This allows students to see a form of behaviour on which they can model their own practice and so transform their attitudes. Little time is lost as a result of bad behaviour and good behaviour is promoted as the norm throughout the day, in lessons and around the school. This strongly underpins the progress and achievement that students demonstrate.
- There is a culture of high expectations, yet staff show empathy and when students fall short of expected standards they are encouraged to reflect on this, then to try again. There is a feeling of mutual respect and friendship between everyone in the school, supporting positive attitudes. These are reflected in the care taken with the building and its facilities, which are taken care of well. This helps ensure that all the independent school standards for students' welfare, health and safety are met.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet all legal requirements. Staff have up-to-date training in this, as well as in first aid and fire safety.
- Parents and carers have no concerns around safety at school and believe that their children are very well cared for. Risk assessments of the site, places to be visited and of the students themselves are rigorous and fully in line with the school's published policy.
- Bullying is addressed in lessons and all students have signed up to the school's anti-bullying charter. It is a topic covered in personal, social and health education, giving students an understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. Students are also aware of the risks from the misuse of social networking sites and the internet. The supervision of students in school is effective, so instances of bullying are rare. When there have been issues around relationships between students they have been dealt with quickly and effectively according to the students themselves.
- Attendance remains below the national average but the school works hard to improve this. In the large majority of cases, attendance is currently far better than it was in previous settings. Some students had previously all but dropped out of education prior to joining TLG.
- The premises themselves are safe and secure, and any visitors are checked carefully. Care is taken to ensure that only those already known to the staff or proprietor are asked to come into school to talk to students.
- Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of students are such that all the appropriate standards for independent schools are met. Contracts to ensure the regular checking of equipment are monitored carefully by the proprietor.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection because teachers now have access to much more effective information about the impact they have on students' progress. The two staff work together very closely and effectively, delivering lessons together throughout the day to ensure that all students are playing a full part and participating in learning.
- Planning is thorough and allows teachers to personalise their teaching to address individual needs. This ensures that every student is challenged at the right level. In this way each student is encouraged to

make the best possible progress and maximise their potential.

- Students enjoy their lessons and this supports the progress they all make. Teaching is consistently good in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics, which are seen as the key skills that students will need. This is helping students to make progress and raise their achievement.
- Teachers often show good skills in questioning and this not only shows that students have understood a topic, it also encourages them to express their views and to think about their learning.
- Marking not only rewards good work but also points to improvements that would make it even better. Work is checked regularly and there are regular opportunities for students to comment on the quality of their own work and that of the others. This has a positive effect in developing students' confidence as well as making them think about the work they have been doing.
- A high proportion of the students are disadvantaged, and all have additional needs as a result of their challenging behaviour and previous schooling. They are all able to do well because of the way in which careful planning takes individual needs into account. In the same way, the most able students are given greater challenge to ensure that they are fully stretched in lessons and so make the progress of which they are capable.
- There has been a start to collaborative work with mainstream schools, which allows teachers and students greater access to specialist facilities. This helps to ensure that teaching is more relevant and stretching for students as they move towards the end of Key Stage 4. This collaboration is starting to support opportunities for teachers to meet and work alongside other professional colleagues, supporting their professional development and expertise.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards for teaching and assessment are met.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students first join with low attainment because of their previous schooling. The good teaching and support they receive improves their behaviour and re-engages them in learning so that they make good progress and achieve well.
- The importance of reading is realised and time is built into every day to enable reading for pleasure. More formal support to improve reading is also part of the English curriculum and progress is monitored carefully to enable positive support to be provided where progress is not as good as expected.
- By the end of Year 11 most students who have received TLG support go on to colleges of further education, some form of training or into work. Virtually all leave school with success in work-related or basic skills courses and are able to appreciate the importance of learning and living successful lives in the future.
- Since the last inspection, a much more effective way of recording students' progress has been developed within the TLG group. Teachers break down each subject being studied into smaller areas that show clearly the skills that students have gained and areas where more work is needed. This has been a great help in enabling teachers to target work to address and meet individual needs more swiftly.
- There is clear evidence that a large majority of students are making progress that is line with and often better than that expected from their individual starting points as a result of more effective teaching.
- In a school where the large majority of students are identified as disadvantaged, and all have special educational needs, attainment and progress is advancing at a faster rate than that found nationally, albeit from very low starting points. This is because of the good quality of the support they receive.
- Similarly, good teaching makes more demands of the most able students in the school and this challenges them to start to reach their full potential. As a result their progress accelerates throughout their time in the school and is reflected in their final outcomes.
- Care is taken to gain a clear picture of students' abilities when they first join the school. This enables challenging progress targets and individual learning plans to be put into place; students' progress is then tracked regularly. In this way the needs of every individual can be met effectively. This includes measuring individual emotional needs when they start, so that the full range of individual needs is addressed over time.
- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards relating to students' achievement are met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | |
|---------|----------------------|
| Grade | Judgement |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136706 |
| Inspection number | 462891 |
| DfE registration number | 869/6201 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

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| Type of school | Special day school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 12–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | Seven |
| Number of part time pupils | One |
| Proprietor | Reading Community Church |
| Chair | Paul Garratt |
| Headteacher | John-Luke Casey |
| Date of previous school inspection | 31 January – 1 February 2012 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £15,000 |
| Telephone number | 0118 321 4506 |
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