

LVS Oxford

Spring Hill Road, Begbroke, Oxford, OX5 1RX

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
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- Despite being open for a relatively short period, the school is improving and developing rapidly.
- The accommodation is of a very high standard and provides a warm and welcoming learning environment for students.
- Students make good progress, including in the sixth form provision. Most have previous negative experiences of education. Some students have been out of school for prolonged periods. They gain trust in staff, settle quickly and start to enjoy learning and as a result start to succeed.
- Students develop positive attitudes to learning and each other. Their behaviour improves rapidly while at the school. The safe environment boosts students' confidence.
- Teaching is good. The mix of academic expectations and good knowledge of students so that they can overcome their barriers to learning is very effective.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher, senior leaders and trustees ensure the school complies with all the independent school standards and that there is an upbeat learning climate, where students thrive academically and in their personal development.
- Parents and carers have positive views of the school and all would recommend it to other parents and carers.
- Staff are proud to be a part of the school and are enthusiastic in their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Students do not read widely for pleasure.
- Vocational and work-related learning is not sufficiently developed.
- Occasionally, some more-able students are not stretched in lessons.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 13 parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Students' work, surveys, annual reports and other records were scrutinised. 19 staff responses to a questionnaire were analysed.
- The school's documentation was examined, including planning for subjects, records of students' progress and the welfare and safeguarding of students.
- The school does not receive any pupil premium funding.
- Although this is a residential special school, the residential facilities were not part of this inspection.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The views of parents and carers were gained through their responses to a school-based questionnaire and 12 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- LVS Oxford educates secondary-aged students who have a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum disorder.
- Currently the age of students ranges between 11–18 years.
- The school is located in a former priory in Oxfordshire. The proprietors are the Licensed Trade Charity.
- Most students have a statement of special educational needs. Local authorities fund most, but some places are funded by parents and carers.
- Currently, all but one is a day student.
- The school draws pupils from six local authorities.
- The school does not make use of alternative providers.
- The school aims to equip young people to become successful learners in charge of their learning, and to help them develop into confident individuals in control of their feelings and actions.
- The school was first registered in June 2014 and opened in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' achievements further by:
 - providing regular opportunities for students to read more widely
 - extending and developing vocational and work-related learning for students
 - ensuring more-able students are stretched further by using probing questions and setting work which extends them further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher and Trustees have set the school on a firm footing, where initiatives are developing with pace. There is a culture of high expectations and respect for all students. The positive and supportive climate enables students to settle into school quickly and thrive. The headteacher and director of special educational needs provide strong leadership to drive teaching and learning forward.
- Teachers' work is checked regularly by the headteacher and through external reviews. This has resulted in teaching improving well and being good overall. There is a system of formally appraising the work of teachers, with an appropriate link between salary progression and the quality of teaching.
- The school ensures that equality of opportunity for all its students is secure. Students are treated as unique individuals, based on a thorough knowledge of their needs, so that learning is tailored well to enable students to start to engage in learning and make progress.
- Due to the small size of the school and the fact that the school is developing, there is currently no middle leadership, but this is planned for as the school expands.
- The school's self-evaluation is an honest appraisal of where the school is in its current cycle of development. The school makes use of effective external advice to bring about greater rigour and challenge.
- The curriculum is developing and growing. It meets the needs of students well and the ability to provide tailored support is a strength. Older students work toward appropriate external accreditation. There is some variation in the quality of the schemes of work across the subjects. The school recognises that the expansion of work-related learning and vocational courses is an area for development.
- Students receive appropriate careers guidance to help them make informed choices about future courses and possible career options.
- The school actively promotes British values and the school's own values closely mirror these. Students are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Staff are aware that some students can be vulnerable to extremism through the internet and are vigilant about the dangers. The effective promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a strong impact on students feeling safe and developing positive attitudes to sometimes rigidly held views.
- The school is well placed to make further improvements. The school development plan is well judged and priorities have realistic timelines and a clearly planned course of action to secure further improvements.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and meet requirements to ensure students are safe and protected.

■ The governance of the school:

- The Trustees have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development, particularly as it is a new and developing provision. The accommodation is excellent, with further scope to develop specialist areas such as design and technology, indoor physical education and horticultural facilities.
- The Trustees are an increasingly active and effective body. They receive good information on the quality of teaching, students' progress and behaviour to help them understand how improvements are being made and to check that students are progressing as well as they should be.
- Advice from an external consultant has helped the Trustees to bring their knowledge up to date, to know how to ask challenging questions and hold the school to account more effectively.
- There are mechanisms in place to tackle weak teaching, and link pay to performance.
- Trustees ensure compliance with safeguarding requirements, that British values are promoted and that the school meets all the independent school standards. They increasingly hold the school to account. Relationships with placing local authorities are good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Lunchtimes are valuable social occasions to encourage students to develop their communication skills. Reminders on tables encourage students to engage and listen during conversations so that interaction is meaningful and positive.
- School records show that over time, students' behaviour improves well and students are at ease, thereby reducing their levels of anxiety.
- Students learn to tolerate a wider range of foods, through the excellent high-quality meals on offer.
- Students are good ambassadors. They are proud of their school. They increase their levels of maturity

and develop positive attitudes to learning. Some students have been out of school for years, but now attend school regularly and enjoy it.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Plentiful opportunities encourage students to work collaboratively, for example in physical education. Daily tutorial times encourage students to relate with one another more confidently as well as focusing on aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- British values are actively promoted. Students are enthusiastic members of the school council and have developed student-friendly policies such as anti-bullying. Students learn to become active citizens and have formed a link with the local MP.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Staff ensure that students are well supervised at all times to ensure their own safety and that of others.
- Students spoken to say they feel safe and secure from bullying or cyber bullying. Students have trust in staff to confide in them with any concerns. Records show that bullying is a rare occurrence.
- Parents and carers through Parent View and the school's own survey indicate they feel their children are safe, happy and protected at school. One parent or carer wrote, 'What a huge change LVS has made to my son, he absolutely loves LVS and all the staff.'
- Students' attendance improves dramatically and many have good attendance records because they enjoy school. Overall, attendance is just below average.
- Students are taught how to keep safe online. The school recognises the importance of equipping students with ways to protect themselves online outside of school and the dangers of giving out personal information.
- The scheduling of maintenance contractors sometimes negatively affects lessons, such as grass cutting. Students can become distracted by the maintenance and are not fully aware of the potential health and safety risks it presents.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good. There are many strengths to teaching. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and this does much to put students at their ease. Students commented on the informal and relaxed atmosphere, which they find helps them to achieve well.
- Teachers are flexible and work hard to meet the different needs of students well. They recognise when students are struggling and know when to give them time and space. Behaviour is managed sensitively and effectively so that disruption to learning is minimised.
- Expectations of students are high, which is reflected in their workbooks. Work is well presented and shows good progression of knowledge and understanding.
- Specialist tutors are used to supplement teaching expertise, for example in mathematics and science. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are fostered well in lessons and in tutorials. However, opportunities for students to read for pleasure are not planned systematically.
- The school employs occupational and speech therapists, who work closely with teaching staff. They develop their knowledge of how to use sensory methods to get the best out of students. A number of students need 'sensory breaks' to help them to refocus on tasks and enable students to concentrate for longer periods of time, reducing their levels of frustration.
- Teaching assistants are generally used well in lessons to support students in their learning. Relationships between staff and students are supportive and are successful in enabling students to become more confident and participate positively in lessons.
- In some lessons, students are not always stretched enough through the use of probing questioning or activities which fully extend them.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The range of attainment of students is extremely wide. Some students work at well below expected levels while others are high functioning.
- Most students have attended the school for less than two terms. Assessment information held by the school and scrutiny of work indicate that nearly all students start to make rapid and improved progress. Some students take time to engage in learning positively, after having refused to attend previous schools.
- The school measures how students make progress in managing aspects of their autism through its own

'Autism acceptance scale'. This information suggests that students make good improvements in this area, moving from lack of awareness through to acceptance and becoming more positive about their autism.

- Where subject specialists are used, for example in mathematics and science, expectations are high and promote good progress. Occasionally in other lessons, some students are not stretched enough.
- In English, more-able students structure their written work to support their arguments, such as in the development of Juliet's character. In mathematics, higher-attaining students work toward GCSE awards at a higher level. They are confident in using inverse calculations, convert decimals and fractions and understand Pythagoras's theory.
- The school has identified a small number of students who are eligible for pupil premium funding but do not receive it, as this money is not passed onto them by placing authorities. Nevertheless, these students make equivalent progress in mathematics and English. The progress of the small number of girls is tracked carefully to ensure they achieve in line with boys.
- Opportunities for students to read more widely and regularly are not systematic enough to produce a culture of reading for pleasure.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Sixth form students work at levels in line with their abilities and make rapid progress over time.
- More-able students work towards AS courses in English and science. Other students work towards functional skills awards. Some students undertake distance-learning courses if they are not able to cope with attending college.
- The school makes use of a limited number of vocational courses, such as small animal and childcare, but work-related learning and accredited opportunities for vocational subjects are not yet extensive enough.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and they recognise the improvements they make academically and develop their self-confidence and self-esteem well.
- The small number of students in the sixth form makes it unrealistic to have dedicated sixth form provision, separate from Key Stage 4 students, but overall leadership and management by the headteacher is good.

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

Unique reference number	141208
Inspection number	462901
DfE registration number	931/6015

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.

Type of school	Special
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	4
Number of part time pupils	3
Proprietor	The Licensed Trade Charity
Chair	Anita Adams
Headteacher	Jane Straw
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees (day pupils)	£37,500
Annual fees (boarders)	£57,600
Telephone number	01865 595170
Fax number	N/A
Email address	janestraw@lvs-oxford.org.uk

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