

Lewis Charlton School

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

Inspection dates 3–5 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils make outstanding progress over time from their various starting points, which are mostly below national expectations on entry to the school.
- Pupils make excellent progress with the improvement of their literacy and numeracy skills, including oral communication.
- The quality of teaching and assessment across all key stages and subjects is outstanding and contributes strongly to pupils' excellent achievement.
- Pupils make good improvements in their behaviour and their self-awareness. They are assisted strongly to develop increasing independence.
- The quality of the curriculum is exemplary. All pupils have access to extensive opportunities to extend their academic, vocational and personal development.
- The good quality of the sixth form provides a secure environment in which pupils mature and prepare effectively for the transition to college or work placements.
- Senior leaders and directors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and have ensured that the requirements of the independent school standards are all met. They have ensured strong improvement since the previous inspection.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. Priorities for improvement are well chosen. Arrangements for further training for staff are robust and effective.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Arrangements for governance do not include a sufficiently independent, external view to ensure rigorous accountability for all aspects of the school's provision.
- The evaluation of the school's extensive information about pupils' behaviour is not systematic enough to inform continuous improvement.
- The quality of pupils' writing is not as well developed as other aspects of their literacy skills.
- Pupils are not provided with a strong enough awareness and understanding of cultural diversity in Britain and the wider world.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Confirm and implement proposed arrangements for an independent system of governance.
- Further improve pupils' behaviour and personal development by:
 - systematic analysis and evaluation of the wealth of available information
 - planning appropriate actions to address any identified areas for improvement.
- Plan and implement a concerted approach to:
 - the improvement of pupils' writing across all subject areas and key stages
 - the improvement of mathematics at Key Stage 3.
- Provide further whole-school opportunities to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in Britain and the wider world.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Improvements identified at the time of the school's progress monitoring inspection have been secured and maintained. The school continues to move forward, promoting high-quality learning, achievement and personal development for pupils.
- Senior leaders ensure that high expectations of what pupils can achieve underpin all aspects of the school's work. They have achieved and sustained a culture of mutual respect between staff and pupils, based on solid, confident personal relationships.
- The headteacher has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and supports a culture of continuous improvement. Talented senior and middle leaders work extremely hard and demonstrate passion and commitment to do the best for all pupils. They do not give up or accept lost causes, consequently, pupils are enabled to address their often complex personal needs confidently.
- The performance and contribution of staff are managed well. The school provides extensive opportunities for personal and career development, through in-house and external training events. These activities have a strong positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' personal development.
- The analysis of information about pupils' achievement is excellent. Senior leaders have a robust understanding of the progress being made by pupils across both key stages and all areas of the curriculum. This evaluation contributes positively to the identification of areas for improvement.
- Members of staff who completed an inspection questionnaire state that they are proud to be members of staff at the school and that the school is well led and managed.
- Arrangements for the analysis of other aspects of the school's work, including pupils' behaviour and personal development, are not as precisely developed. Excellent administrative systems provide extensive information for tracking, evaluation and further action. The potential for such analysis to inform school improvement is not fully implemented.
- Senior leaders ensure that British values are promoted in all aspects of the school's work. Staff have been trained in the government's 'Prevent' agenda and maintain effective communications with external agencies.
- Pupils at risk are clearly identified and well supported. Senior leaders maintain regular and effective working relationships with a range of external agencies and services to ensure that pupils' complex needs are addressed.
- Excellent opportunities are provided across the curriculum for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. A range of visitors, off-site visits and themes, for example in personal and social education lessons, ensure that pupils develop a strong understanding of services and institutions provided to support their well-being.
- The school demonstrates a firm commitment to diversity and equality through its curriculum and through emotional and social support for individuals. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of beliefs and cultures in the wider community is not as well developed.
- Senior leaders ensure that the additional funding provided to enhance learning opportunities for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs is used effectively. The allocation of funding and its impact are evaluated robustly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Procedures for the recruitment and further training of staff are implemented and monitored rigorously. The school provides a safe environment in which pupils are encouraged to develop increasing responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Regulations related to welfare, health and safety, including for example, premises and fire safety, risk assessments and supervision of pupils, are monitored and implemented appropriately.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The headteacher is also the proprietor and is ably supported by a small team of directors, each of whom has well-defined areas of responsibility within the daily life of the school. The directors are ambitious for the success of the school and fulfil their responsibilities well in supporting the headteacher and senior staff.
 - This team has ensured that important improvements have been made, and are being sustained, in fulfilling the school's statutory responsibilities.
 - Appropriate arrangements are in place for the supervision and appraisal of the headteacher and senior staff.

- The headteacher and directors have recently identified the need for a greater level of independent external review and evaluation of the school's work. As a result, they have prepared plans for the creation of an independent reference group to improve the school's governance arrangements. These plans have not yet been implemented to provide appropriately balanced support and accountability for senior leaders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The quality of teaching across Key Stages 3 and 4 is highly effective as a result of outstanding teaching and assessment.
- Senior leaders provide excellent support and guidance for staff in the development of a curriculum which is highly personalised to meet the learning needs of each pupil. All pupils have access to the full range of required areas of learning, with a balance between academic, vocational and personal development suited to their age.
- The details of the National Curriculum and of externally accredited courses have been expertly analysed and broken down into appropriate small learning steps. These steps for each subject underpin teachers' planning and ensure that each pupil is working at a level in line with their current achievement.
- Middle leaders provide high-quality subject expertise and a secure understanding of how pupils learn. They individualise the content of their subjects to the specific learning styles and abilities of each pupil. Each pupil's timetable is different and carefully tailored to ensure that all are motivated and supported to achieve well.
- Teaching throughout the school is characterised by excellent planning, supported by a good range of visual and practical resources. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they ensure that learning activities are pitched at an appropriate level, require concentration and perseverance and result in measurable outcomes.
- Experienced educarers (education support workers) work alongside teachers to ensure that each pupil understands what they are expected to achieve, that behaviour and focus are maintained, and that pupils are helped to overcome their frustrations and develop self-confidence.
- Teachers and educarers provide excellent challenge for pupils in the quality of their questioning. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and responses, and to develop increasing depth in both oral and written responses.
- Staff teaching practical and vocational courses place a suitable emphasis on health and safety routines while encouraging pupils to take responsibility and respond to challenge. All areas of potential risk are carefully assessed and tasks matched well to the individual capabilities and needs of pupils.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing abilities. Pupils demonstrate success in the development of their skills across all areas of literacy, although progress in writing is not as consistently secure as in other aspects.
- The excellent opportunities provided in mathematics and science ensure that pupils are enabled to develop their learning progressively. Pupils understand the significance of learning in these core subject areas in preparation for future success in external examinations and employment.
- The quality of teachers' marking provides exemplary written and oral feedback to pupils; areas for further improvement are identified and communicated to them without undermining their confidence and willingness to persevere. Teachers place a huge emphasis on 'trying hard' and not giving up. Pupils are proud of their successes and the awards achieved for their learning.
- Throughout the school's various sites there is extensive evidence of pupils' achievements, for example in art, woodwork, construction, computing, music, animal care and horticulture. Pupils also enjoy and achieve success in a range of outdoor adventurous activities.
- Staff make excellent use of assessment to accelerate learning and to evaluate the success of their learning. Pupils understand what they have achieved and the next steps required to maintain their progress.
- Pupils' diverse personal characteristics and achievements are valued and celebrated. Pupils are enabled consistently to achieve and to take on new challenges.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils mostly enter the school with negative previous experiences of education. For many, their social and emotional barriers to learning have had a negative impact on the development of positive relationships with adults and with other pupils.
- Pupils demonstrate good improvements in their self-confidence and ability to take advantage of the wide range of opportunities provided by the school. The school provides extensive, appropriate care and personal support for pupils' well-being.
- Pupils state that staff treat them with respect: 'They don't shout, they talk.' Pupils appreciate the 'calm and peaceful atmosphere in the school' and that they are able to make friends with others who have had similar experiences to their own.
- The school provides robust support for pupils as they prepare for the transition to life after school. Independent careers advice and guidance are provided through the services of placing authorities. These are appropriately coordinated by senior school staff and great care is taken to ensure that the views of individual pupils and their families are taken into account in planning for the future.
- Good attention is given to the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. The school promotes a culture of openness in which diversity is celebrated and stereotyping is discouraged. Positive relationships between pupils and adults embrace British values of mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including an appropriate emphasis on preventing bullying and understanding e-safety. Pupils know that any unsafe or unfair practice will be dealt with firmly but fairly.
- Senior leaders ensure a robust approach to all aspects of safeguarding pupils' welfare. Staff are recruited, trained and supported in line with up-to-date government guidance, ensuring that pupils' personal safety and well-being are high priorities in the daily life of the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The majority make strong progress in the improvement of their behaviour and respond positively to the high expectations set by the staff. Behaviour around the school is good; lunchtimes, for example, present an orderly atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons and prepared appropriately for learning. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to manage the transitions between lessons; pupils are helped to adjust at their own pace to the various demands and learning environments of different subjects and activities.
- Pupils display a variety of responses to new challenges and activities. Pupils with autistic characteristics, for example, are managed sensitively and with considerable encouragement to take on unfamiliar responsibilities.
- A small number of pupils struggle to manage their anger and frustration when they find the demands of the classroom too demanding. Staff have a consistent approach to the management of challenging behaviour. Supported 'time out', opportunities for reflection and calming, and personal targets for improved behaviour are used effectively to enable pupils to develop appropriate responses and self-discipline.
- Any incidents of misbehaviour or unwillingness to cooperate with expectations are managed and recorded appropriately, including any incidents requiring physical restraint. The school's records demonstrate a strong reduction over time in the number of incidents and associated sanctions.
- Staff, pupils and parents agree that behaviour is managed well. Parents who responded to a school questionnaire or to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire identify positive actions taken by the school to enable pupils to settle and benefit from the provision.
- Senior leaders and subject staff have outstanding skills in personalising timetables for individual pupils in a manner which reduces anxiety and tension without removing the fundamental requirement for continuous development of essential learning.
- Pupils' attendance is close to the national average. This represents considerable improvement on attendance in previous settings for the majority of pupils. Staff work tirelessly, and mostly with good effect, to ensure that the persistent absence of a small minority of pupils is addressed consistently.

Outcomes for pupils **are outstanding**

- Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment which are mostly below, or well below, those expected for their age. They have previously experienced social, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning which have often restricted their attendance at school and prevented them from making expected levels of progress.
- Once they are settled into the expectations and routines of the school, the majority of pupils make outstanding progress. As a result, the proportions of pupils making or exceeding expected rates of progress are high compared with the national average.
- The school's reliable assessment information for the last two years indicates that pupils make substantial, accelerated progress across a range of subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Pupils make sustained progress towards expected standards from their various starting points in English, mathematics and science. Those who are placed at the school for significant lengths of time sustain their excellent progress and achieve increasing success with externally accredited qualifications.
- Pupils' rates of progress do not always maintain a smooth upward path. Their achievement is sometimes affected by emotional and mental health difficulties. However, there is a strong overall upward trend in their knowledge, understanding and ability to apply their learning skills over time.
- There are variations within the extent of progress between different aspects of pupils' learning. Progress in mathematics at Key Stage 3, for example, has not been as consistently strong as in English. Progress in reading is more secure than in writing for some pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils, some of whom are supported by additional funding from their placing local authorities, make excellent progress. The interventions and additional support provided by the school ensure that these pupils are catching up with others with the same starting points nationally.
- Pupils experience strong improvements in their speaking and listening skills; for pupils with characteristics on the autistic spectrum this is particularly creditable.
- Almost all pupils leaving the school since the last inspection have achieved external awards. The number of pupils achieving entry level, functional skills and foundation level GCSE awards has increased significantly in a number and a variety of subjects.
- The small number of the most-able pupils make excellent progress over time. They have overcome personal challenges to achieve higher-grade GCSE or equivalent grades in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, French, religious studies and vocational courses.
- The imaginative curriculum, individually designed for each pupil, enables them to achieve wide-ranging success across a number of practical, vocational and work-related skills. Pupils have achieved externally accredited results in subjects as diverse as animal care, sports, catering, performing arts and personal and social development.
- The small number of pupils completing Year 11 at the school move on to the school's sixth form or into vocational courses at colleges of further education.

Sixth form provision **is good**

- The provision for pupils in the sixth form is targeted very carefully to meet identified individual needs. The small number of pupils continuing into the sixth form require additional time to complete qualifications and to mature socially before moving on to further education and employment.
- Arrangements for the leadership of the sixth form have recently been revised. Senior leaders have a clear and well-informed understanding of the specialised provision required for the school's particular client group. Pupils are very well supported to identify individual courses of study which will equip them in the transition to life beyond school.
- Pupils continue to study for qualifications in literacy and numeracy, together with well-chosen areas of specialism, such as music, canine care, hospitality or construction. Good use is made of the areas of specialism available within the school to provide concentrated time and support for pupils to extend and consolidate their learning.
- A number of teachers contribute to pupils' learning across the main school and the sixth form, including staff in the specialist vocational provisions. The quality of teaching and assessment reflects the excellent practice developed across the school.
- Individual provision is also made for the further development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. All pupils are encouraged to work towards Level 2 qualifications in these essential skills. Pupils also achieve

additional qualifications which build on courses studied at Key Stage 4.

- The sixth form curriculum also includes a strong emphasis on the extension of pupils' wider life skills. They are provided with courses and activities which extend their employability skills, including carefully chosen opportunities for appropriate work experience. Additional enrichment activities are provided, including cooking, conversation, art and music.
- Pupils are assisted sensitively to maintain positive attitudes and behaviour. Senior staff ensure that each pupil understands the benefits of completing accredited courses even when the work is challenging. Pupils respond positively and continue to make good progress with their emotional and social development.
- The school places a strong emphasis on developing resilience for these pupils in order to support their transition to college or employment. Effective arrangements are in place to assist pupils with the identification of suitable courses of study on leaving school, including independent careers advice and guidance from placing authorities. The small number of pupils who left the sixth form last year progressed to courses in catering and information and communication technology.

School details

Unique reference number	134438
Inspection number	10008014
DfE registration number	855/6020

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	Day special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	4
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Lewis Charlton Ltd.
Headteacher	Georgina Pearson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£51,588 to £74,850
Telephone number	01530 560775
Website	www.lewischarltonltd.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@lewischarltonschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	5–6 July 2012

Information about this school

- Lewis Charlton School is an independent day special school located in Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire.
- The school is registered to admit up to 57 boys and girls in the age range 11–19.
- At the time of the previous inspection it also admitted a small number of boarders. This provision has been discontinued.
- The school is located across four sites, all within easy walking distance of each other in the centre of the town. Additional school sites are located at Lodge Farm in rural south-west Leicestershire and Charlton Chapel in nearby Donisthorpe village. The school uses no additional alternative providers.
- There are currently 40 pupils on roll, including four pupils in the sixth form.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Pupils' needs mostly relate to their social, emotional or mental health difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have autistic spectrum conditions.
- Pupils travel to the school from a number of local authorities across Central and East Midlands. Ten pupils are in the care of their local authority.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in July 2012 and a progress monitoring inspection took place in April 2013.
- The school's stated aim is 'to re-engage pupils in the process of education so that they may become confident and successful learners...and eventually take their place as responsible members of society'.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning and looked at samples of written and practical work across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Pupils' and parents' responses to a recent school questionnaire were taken into consideration, in addition to a small number of responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. A meeting was held with a group of pupils, and informal conversations with a number of others. The inspector also took account of questionnaires completed by 23 members of staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Conversations were held with the headteacher, who is also the proprietor, and with members of the board of directors, senior and middle leaders and staff with a variety of management responsibilities.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted inspector

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