

# Liberty Lodge Independent School

23–25 Waterloo Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2NY

## Inspection dates

8–9 December 2015

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Previous leaders did not always provide suitable work experience programmes. As a result, some pupils were not motivated sufficiently or prepared well enough for their future career choices and world of work.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been some weaknesses in teaching. Expectations for learning and behaviour have not been high enough.
- The school has not yet developed systems to track the progress of pupils across the wide range of subjects on offer to them.
- The attendance of a few pupils since the last inspection was too low and their attitudes to learning were sometimes negative. The school's targets for pupils' attendance were too low.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and proprietor have made sure that the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has updated all school policies and procedures to ensure that the school is ready to educate and safeguard new pupils.
- The headteacher offers a range of subjects, which provide opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress.
- There are good policies for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers' recent planning of lessons and for tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is good and shows high expectations for learning, behaviour and personal development.
- Since the last inspection, some pupils have achieved success in their GCSE examinations.

### 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?**

- Improve teaching and raise achievement by developing and implementing:
  - work experience programmes which motivate pupils to prepare for their chosen careers and the world of work
  - progress records to monitor pupils' learning in all their subjects.
- Improve pupils' attendance to at least 95%, ensuring the steps to achieving them are carefully recorded, monitored and supported.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Leaders, within the first two years following the previous inspection, were not effective enough in ensuring that the school met all of the required independent school standards. The school developed and implemented an action plan to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. However, evidence available during this inspection shows that this was not implemented effectively enough as the areas for improvement were not adequately addressed.
- Reports seen, for previous pupils, show that in a significant number of cases their work experience placements broke down after a few weeks. This shows that the weaknesses in the school's provision for careers education and for personal, social and health education, identified as failed regulations in the previous report, were not adequately met. As a result, these pupils were not sufficiently motivated or prepared well enough for their future career choices and the world of work.
- In the past three months, since her appointment, the new headteacher has worked effectively to make sure that all regulations are now met. She has developed a new website and established strong links with outside agencies, such as a music artist and a crime reduction agency. She has also devised a school improvement plan and created a wide range of documentation to support school improvement. She is receiving good support and regular supervision from the care manager, who is also her line manager.
- As the designated person for child protection, the headteacher has been trained to the required level. In addition, the school's brochure and website provide parents and carers with up-to-date information and a list of policies available to them.
- The headteacher has carried out a full audit and review of all policies and procedures. She has also held discussions with both the proprietor and her line manager, regarding the drawing-up of the school improvement plan. This contains clear and well-conceived priorities for further improvement and focuses, rightly, on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
- The headteacher has updated all school policies and procedures to ensure that the school is ready to educate and safeguard new pupils. The school makes thorough checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, and these are recorded appropriately in a single central register of staff employment checks.
- The curriculum policy is up to date and supported by schemes of work, including those for personal, social health and careers education. However, it was not possible to see how effectively they were implemented during this inspection, as there were no pupils on roll. Nevertheless, there is now a clearly planned programme for pupils' personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos. The headteacher has also sourced appropriate arrangements for impartial and high-quality careers guidance through external agencies.
- There are a wide range of academic and work-related subjects for pupils to learn and make progress. The views of pupils are taken into account in planning an individual programme based on their preferred choices of subjects. The proposals for offsite training are well-conceived and based on pupils choosing their future careers. The headteacher has already established effective links with a wide range of alternative and sports providers.
- There are good policies to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including preparation for life in modern Britain. Planned topics include those on democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and respect for those with different beliefs and from different cultural traditions. There are good opportunities for reflection within the planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education. The school's system of rewards and sanctions and high expectations for behaviour promote pupils' awareness of right and wrong and encourage them to act responsibly.
- The headteacher has ensured that there are sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' personal development, learning and welfare, up to the age of 17 years.
- The headteacher has strengthened checks of pupils' skills on entry to the school. She has also developed new systems to record pupils' progress and attainment against National Curriculum level descriptors in English, mathematics and science. Although these systems are not yet available for other subjects, planning shows that the school intends to use examination criteria to assess pupils' attainment in the future. Leaders have ensured that the school is an accredited centre for assessing Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses.
- The recently developed three-year plan to improve access for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. There are new systems in place to record incidents of discrimination and to tackle bullying of any kind.

- The headteacher has ensured that all the independent school standards are met for leadership and management of the school's work, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the school has re-opened to admit pupils, the proprietor has ensured that it is effectively led and managed. She has implemented a robust system of support and supervision for the new headteacher.
  - The proprietor liaises with the headteacher regularly and receives updates on how well the school is developing. These include checks that all policies are up to date to ensure the school is ready to educate and safeguard its pupils and to prepare pupils appropriately for life in modern Britain.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** **requires improvement**

- The school's records of the progress pupils made during the two years following the previous inspection show that there were some weaknesses in teaching. A few pupils did not have positive attitudes to learning. As a result, these pupils did not do as well as they should and staff did not ensure that they made enough progress in preparing for the world of work. As a result, their work experience placements broke down within a few weeks. Also, the school did not have systems in place to track the progress of pupils across the wide range of subjects on offer to them.
- The school now meets all standards in relation to teaching, learning and assessment – although implementation was not seen at the time of the inspection. The headteacher has made improvements to the systems to track information on pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. This will be extended to other subjects in 2016.
- Plans show that pupils' skills will be assessed within the first two weeks on entry to the school. This will include records of their best prior attainment to identify their potential, current attainment, interests and aptitudes for learning. It will also take into account the provision specified in their statement of special educational needs. Targets for learning and response to learning will include termly reviews of pupils' progress against these targets. Parents and pupils will have opportunities to attend annual reviews of statements and parents will receive termly reports on the progress pupils are making.
- An examination of samples of lesson plans shows that sequences of lessons within the range of topics offered to pupils, such as a topic on mountaineering, are suitably planned with well-chosen resources identified to support learning and progress. Lesson plans also specify clear learning outcomes for pupils and set high expectations, with opportunities to extend pupils' thinking.
- Planning and provisional timetables also show that literacy and numeracy skills will be promoted across a range of subjects, and within the offsite training programme.
- The headteacher has ensured that all the independent school standards for teaching and assessment are met.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** **requires improvement**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. There were no available records of checks on risk for placements with offsite training providers to refer to during the inspection. However, the new headteacher has developed robust systems to record all potential risks and provide suitable measures of control to reduce these. Recording systems show that potential risks for each pupil in all activities within and outside school will be thoroughly assessed.
- The school is ready to safeguard its pupils. The safeguarding and child protection policies are up to date and provide useful guidance to staff on all types of abuse, and the procedures to follow in the event of allegations being made. They refer specifically to strategies and to the school's policy to prevent extremism and radicalisation. They also require staff to sign that they have read the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education. Policies for health and safety, fire risk, and first aid are all up to date and ensure that the school complies with the regulations. A full fire risk assessment and testing of electrical appliances was recently completed.
- The new headteacher, as the designated person for health and safety, has received appropriate training on

fire, first aid and health and safety. She also regularly carries out checks on risk in these areas. A sanctions log is in place to record any sanctions and outcomes for unacceptable behaviour. The admissions and attendance registers comply.

- All the independent standards are met for pupils' personal development and welfare.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Records of the few pupils on roll after the previous inspection show that attendance was too low and did not improve sufficiently. As a result, this limited the progress they made. The school's targets and expectations for pupils' attendance were also too low. Current planning shows that short-term targets for attendance are set at 80%. This is well below the national average and is therefore insufficiently challenging.
- The headteacher has raised expectations for behaviour as reflected in the updated behaviour policy. This is backed up by a clear set of rules and is supported by an appropriate hierarchy of sanctions and a system of rewards on display in classrooms. The school intends to record progress against targets for behaviour and attendance.
- The headteacher has ensured that a full range of policies and procedures is in place, so that the independent school standards for this aspect of the school's work are met.

## Outcomes for pupils

## requires improvement

- Evidence shows that since the previous inspection, pupils did not all make enough progress as a result of their poor attendance and negative attitudes to learning.
- There was insufficient evidence to determine the progress these pupils made when following offsite training with external providers.
- The school's records show that other pupils made good academic progress and successfully gained a range of GCSEs, some at A\* to C grades. Records show that the majority of pupils successfully moved on to further education or employment.
- Proposals to plan individualised programmes for pupils based on their chosen subjects should also enable them to make better progress than some have done in the past.
- The headteacher has ensured that all the independent school requirements related to pupils' outcomes are met.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136434
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC408714
<b>Inspection number</b>	10006035
<b>DfE registration number</b>	935/6229

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	0
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ani Kukadia
<b>Headteacher</b>	Charlotte Buckley
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£51,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 218814
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.libertylodge.com">www.libertylodge.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:charlotte.buckley@libertylodge.com">charlotte.buckley@libertylodge.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16–17 November 2011

## Information about this school

- Liberty Lodge Independent School is owned and run by a single person under the proprietorship of Able Health Care Limited. It occupies separate premises attached to Liberty Lodge Children's Home, which is located in a large Victorian house in an urban setting. The school provides education for girls and boys aged 11 to 16 with social, emotional and mental health difficulties who are in residential care there.
- The school opened in September 2010 and was registered in October 2010 to admit up to six pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. At its previous inspection, the quality of education provided at the school was judged as satisfactory with most, but not all, of the independent school regulations met.
- Since the last inspection, there have been four changes of headteacher and only three pupils were admitted up to March 2013. There are currently no pupils on roll and none have entered the school in the last two years. This is because, in July 2013, the proprietor made a request to the Department for Education (DfE) to suspend the school on a temporary basis, while retaining its registration.
- The proprietor gave two reasons for suspending the school. Firstly, the young people in the children's home were all aged over 16 years and attending full-time education outside of the home. Secondly, they were not expecting any pupils aged between 11 and 16 years requiring education services in the school, at least until early 2014. The proprietor explained to the DfE that a temporary suspension would be needed to allow the management team enough time to make changes to their education ethos in order to provide a 24-hour curriculum. The DfE agreed to this request and asked to be kept informed of developments and, in particular, when the school was able to re-admit pupils. In December 2014, the proprietor wrote to the DfE again updating them with the situation regarding the school and confirming that there were no pupils on roll. The DfE has now commissioned a full inspection of the school in order

to check its compliance with the independent school standards for continued registration, while still making judgements.

- All previous pupils have had statements of special educational needs and have exhibited challenging behaviours as a result of their social, emotional and mental health needs. A few pupils have had additional special educational needs arising from autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. All previous pupils have had histories of low attendance, poor attitudes to learning and have entered the school extremely reluctant to engage in education.
- A new headteacher, who is also the sole classteacher, was appointed in September 2015 to re-open the school.
- The school aims to help pupils become confident learners so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.
- During the inspection, the school informed the inspector that it had written to the DfE to request that the upper age range of pupils be extended to 17 years.
- This inspection was aligned with the welfare inspection of Liberty Lodge Children's Home where the overall quality of the boarding provision was judged as good. A copy of that report is published separately on Ofsted's website as the children's home and did not form part of this inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector scrutinised past records of three pupils who were admitted from November 2011 to March 2013, as no pupils have been admitted since then. This included records of examination successes, records of attendance and work experience.
- The inspector visited an offsite alternative provider and observed a discussion held between that provider and the headteacher to look at the curriculum which may be offered to new pupils when they are admitted.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards required for continued registration. These included: the curriculum policy and schemes of work for all subjects offered; assessment systems and records of progress; all policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and health and safety; records of risk assessments in school and arrangements for risk assessments when pupils will attend alternative providers or participate in outside trips; the first aid policy; the fire policy, fire risk assessments, records of testing fire and electrical equipment; the complaints procedures and complaints log; all policies and documentation made available to parents in hard copy and through the school's website.
- The inspector also looked at documentation, curriculum planning and accommodation to determine whether or not the school could extend its upper age range from 16 to 17 years.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the care manager, the social care regulatory inspector and a telephone conversation was held with the proprietor. It was not possible to seek pupils' or parents' views as there were no pupils on roll.

## Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016

