

The LPW School

LPW House, Princess Street, Bristol, Avon BS3 4AG

Inspection dates

2–3 March 2016

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

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent and requires improvement. Not enough pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils do not learn quickly enough how to spell, punctuate and use grammar correctly.
- Assessment systems are in place but not all staff use information that the school has about pupils to help fill gaps in their learning. In addition, pupils are too often given work that is too easy, particularly the most able.
- In the past, staff have not had sufficient coaching and training so that they can help pupils to learn more quickly and to a deeper level.
- Pupils' behaviour and welfare require improvement. Too many pupils do not adopt healthy lifestyles.
- Some of the activities that teachers provide are not inspiring or related to pupils' interests. On these occasions, sometimes pupils' behaviour slips and learning is disrupted.
- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium and who have the lowest attendance rates make less progress than their classmates.
- Pupils generally leave the school with accreditation in English and mathematics. This reflects pupils' starting points when they joined the school, but not always their ability. Accreditation at the higher GCSE levels, or equivalent, and for other subjects is limited.
- Leadership and governance have changed since the previous inspection. The governing body is very new. Although its capacity has increased, it is just beginning to demonstrate its effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- Seniors leaders know what has to improve and how to do it. Significant improvements have already begun. They have galvanised the staff who now have a shared vision for the school.
- Staff are being held to account more robustly for their work and are being provided with support to improve.
- Pupils are proud of their work and generally keep their workbooks and folders neat and tidy.
- Pupils' emotional and social development has improved, helping them to be ready to learn.
- Pupils' attendance improves when compared with their previous schools.
- Pupils trust staff, and feel safe and secure in school. Bullying is rare. Relationships within the school, and with partner organisations, help to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Those pupils who are the most vulnerable, due to their circumstances, make equal progress to their classmates because of the good-quality support they receive.

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 the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be consistently good or better, so that pupils make more rapid progress from their starting points by:
 - improving the quality of feedback to pupils so that they know what they have to do to improve their work, particularly in their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar, so that they learn from their mistakes
 - ensuring that pupils are provided with work that is suitably interesting and demanding, particularly for the most able
 - raising the quality of adults' questioning skills so that it deepens pupils' understanding and extends their learning
 - ensuring that adults use information that the school has about pupils to help fill gaps in pupils' learning, so that gaps in the progress that different pupil groups make are reduced
 - continue to develop coaching and training experiences for staff so that they can help pupils to learn more quickly and to a deeper level.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum provided to raise pupils' levels of attainment and increase their interest in learning by:
 - providing pupils with more practical experiences related to their studies so that they learn to apply the skills in 'real-life' situations related to their own interests
 - increasing the range and level of courses available, so that most pupils can achieve the higher levels of GCSE or equivalent in more subjects, particularly the most able.
- Improve pupils' personal development and well-being by ensuring that:
 - all pupils attend as often as they should
 - pupils adopt healthy lifestyles.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have very recently taken up their posts. Together with senior leaders and proprietors, they have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas that require improvement. They have used an external review to help produce a school development plan with a set of clear, appropriate priorities and actions.
- The deputy headteacher has already started to train and support staff to increase the consistency of teaching and learning at the school. The impact of this is clearly seen in the improvements made to teachers' planning for learning.
- In the past, teachers and other adults have not been able to share what is working well and to learn from each other. The new training system is helping to improve this situation. The school leaders are very aware that all staff need further coaching and training for learning to improve quickly.
- Staff are being held to account more robustly for their work through the improved performance management arrangements and pupil assessment systems.
- The curriculum meets the requirements of the independent school standards. Through the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) and wider key skills units of 'Problem solving', 'Working with others' and 'Improving own learning', the pupils extend their creative, scientific and technological experiences.
- Senior leaders also listen to pupils and, on their suggestion, make changes to the curriculum. They agree that although there are some opportunities, more are needed to provide pupils with practical experiences related to English, mathematics, information technology and science so that they learn to apply the skills in 'real-life' situations related to their own interests.
- The school is also in the process of strengthening the curriculum to include a greater range of accreditation and at a higher level of challenge. It is replacing the current work experience with work placements for pupils, based on their interests and aspirations for when they leave school.
- Relationships between the school and other partner organisations and local services are a significant strength. Because of this, pupils who are the most vulnerable due to their circumstances are effectively supported, kept safe and make appropriate progress in their learning.
- The information provided directly to parents and that on the school's website provides parents and others with a clear overview of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has only very recently been formed. The proprietors have appointed governors with a good range of experience and expertise, most notably the Chair of the Governing Body. The governing body is in the process of identifying the way that individual members will work so that the members are allocated activities that complement their skills. In addition, it is intended that an external review of governance will be undertaken to help support and develop governance of the school. As a newly formed body, it has not yet had time to influence the strategic direction of the school or demonstrate effectiveness in holding senior leaders robustly to account for their actions.
 - Some of the roles and responsibilities between the school and the overarching company are not clear. As a result, some of the systems that the company uses to support the school are not always considered from a school perspective.
 - Since the previous inspection, the proprietor has continued to invest in developing the school's provision effectively. The premises at both sites meet the independent school standards. However, the Docklands site is considerably less attractive and has fewer spaces for teaching. As it is a shared space, the amount of stimulus material and celebration of pupils' work that can be permanently displayed is reduced. Conversely, the main site is exemplary; everyone is rightly proud of the building. The company has invested heavily in a high-quality refurbishment of the building, resources, fixtures, fittings and equipment. The governing body and proprietor are working hard to reduce this inequality between the two sites.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Procedures for the appointment of staff, maintaining personnel files and related information are rigorous. Leaders and managers ensure that the school's practice to keep pupils safe complies with guidance issued by the Secretary of State, set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, July 2015. Appropriate training has ensured that school leaders are aware of their duties and are working with other agencies, for example to prevent potential radicalisation and extremism. Staff are aware of the mandatory reporting requirements that came into force on 31 October 2015.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across, and between, the two sites is inconsistent. Pupils' work contains numerous spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Pupils are not learning sufficiently well from their mistakes to improve these aspects of their writing.
- The information that the school has about the pupils is not used by enough adults to ensure that the gaps in pupils' learning are swiftly closed. As a result, staff do not ensure that the work given to pupils is sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able.
- Questioning by staff does not consistently probe or challenge pupils to think deeper and harder about their learning. Adults sometimes provide answers to their own questions too soon, and do not give enough time for the pupils to ponder and to try to work out the answer for themselves.
- Most of the pupils who spoke with the inspector want to try work that is more difficult. This is because the school is successfully raising pupils' aspirations.
- Teachers and other adults are keen to provide the very best education for the pupils. They have been receptive to the newly introduced training to improve teaching and learning. They have embraced the changes that the senior team has introduced with enthusiasm. The way lessons are planned is now more coherent, following the new school policy. It is increasingly taking note of those pupils who need more support in lessons and those who need to be challenged further.
- The school has not had a definitive marking policy and staff have developed their own systems. The new policy has just been agreed in consultation with staff.
- Staff have high expectations about the quality of presentation and care that pupils should take with their books; as a result, pupils' workbooks are tidy.
- Pupils are encouraged to read in lessons. Most pupils gain in confidence and are comfortable to read aloud to their classmates. This is because pupils are encouraged by staff to 'have a go', and when they do they are supported well by other pupils if they get something wrong.
- The staff are skilled in working with pupils who are reluctant learners. They build very positive relationships that support and encourage pupils to behave, and to learn during the school day.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school educates pupils on the benefits of healthy lifestyles but some pupils choose not to adopt these approaches.
- Weekly partnership work with the Bristol Drug Project has enabled pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and to support those pupils at risk of substance misuse.
- The school does not closely measure the progress that pupils make in their emotional and social development. Nevertheless, it is clear from discussion with pupils, their increased attendance and general behaviour that this is a strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Pupils grow in self-esteem and confidence due to the high-quality care and emotional support they get from the school staff. They have a named member of staff who works closely with them day to day and with whom they regularly meet to discuss any problems they may be facing, and to set developmental targets. Pupils trust the staff and believe they care about them as individuals because they know staff will go 'the extra mile' for them.

- Break and lunch times are sociable occasions. Pupils often make lunch for everyone, at which they sit and eat together well.
- Pupils have appropriate opportunities to take regular exercise. The newly equipped gym at the Bedminster site is a testament to the company's commitment to providing good-quality resources, as well as enabling pupils to use other facilities in the local community for sports and leisure.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils are generally respectful to staff and each other. However, sometimes their behaviour slips to a level where they receive a fixed-term exclusion. The school uses exclusions appropriately. Repeat offences for pupils are unusual. To date there have been no permanent exclusions and staff have not needed to use physical restraint.
- A commitment from parents to ensure that their child regularly attends school is expected and most parents ensure that they do. Where a pupil's attendance is not good enough the school works effectively, in conjunction with other agencies and partners, to help it increase.
- Pupils' attendance has significantly improved compared with their attendance at previous schools. This is particularly so for girls and pupils looked after by their local authority. The vast majority of pupils have a record of previous poor attendance and some have been school refusers.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and demonstrate sustained concentration when teachers enthuse and challenge them to work hard. However, when activities are less inspirational, or are not sufficiently difficult, pupils quickly lose interest and disrupt their own, and sometimes other pupils', learning.
- In such a small school, with a staff-to-pupil ratio of one-to-five, bullying is unusual.
- The reward system is effective at improving the behaviour of pupils. Rewards are suitably varied to meet individual pupils' areas of interest.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' attainment is well below that seen nationally. When they join the school most pupils have a negative view of themselves as learners, with low self-esteem and aspirations. Attendance at school before joining LPW is often erratic, particularly from Years 7 to 10 in secondary school.
- The school leaders rightly focus on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. When pupils join the school, they are tested to check these skills. Pupils generally leave with functional skills or entry-level accreditations in English and mathematics.
- Given the short time that most pupils have attended this school, pupils generally make the expected progress from when they joined. However, more of the current pupils attained the higher levels in their national tests when they left primary school compared with pupils in previous years. These pupils are capable of getting the higher grades at GCSE level, or equivalent. The school is aware of this. From this year, it is entering the most-able pupils for GCSEs in English and mathematics.
- The progress that girls make is slower than that of boys, particularly those who are most able. Girls make better progress in English than in mathematics. Boys are stronger in mathematics compared with English.
- Those pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium and who have the lowest attendance make slower progress than their classmates.
- Pupils' written work is of a better quality at the Docklands site compared with the Bedminster one. This year, the progress that pupils have made is better for all groups of pupils at Docklands.
- Pupils who are most vulnerable due to their circumstances, who are looked after or who have special educational needs or disability, make similar or better progress than their classmates. This is because of the strong pastoral support they receive and the close working relationships that the school has with local support services and other agencies. For example, 'Personal education plan' meetings for looked after children are conducted every three months, rather than the statutory six months. This enables the agencies involved to swiftly put into place any interventions or support that are needed.
- Those pupils who have been at the school the longest have made the most progress, with progress noticeably increasing at term three of their school placement.
- Through the personal, social and health curriculum, the school promotes equality of opportunity, the rule of law and democracy. They learn how to live independently after school.
- Pupils are effectively supported to apply for apprenticeships, college places or jobs with training. External careers advice and encouragement from staff help prepare the pupils well for the next phase of their learning and training. First aid courses give pupils national accreditation that is useful in the work place.

School details

Unique reference number	137583
Inspection number	10006100
DfE registration number	801/6029
Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school

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.

Age range of pupils	15–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Number of part-time pupils	4
Chair	Dr James Wetz
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Dunsford
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,350
Telephone number	0117 9873700
Website	www.lpw.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@lpw.org.uk/learning
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 September 2012

Information about this school

- The proprietor is a community interest company. It is funded by commissioning local authorities, academies and schools. The company has recently delegated most of the operational activities to be in the charge of a newly formed governing body.
- Admission to the school is by referral from commissioning schools.
- Since the previous inspection of September 2012, when it was judged adequate, the school has changed its location. The main school site is in Bedminster, which also acts as the LPW company head office. The other site is in a shared provision as part of a youth centre called Docklands in the St Pauls area of Bristol. The school does not use any other alternative provision.
- The executive director and head of learning for the company is also the headteacher. A deputy headteacher has recently joined the school.
- Some pupils join the school in the last part of the summer term in Year 10 from mainstream schools or pupil referral units. Other pupils join the school throughout the year, with a few joining in the last couple of weeks. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are almost twice as many boys as girls this year. Of the 47 pupils on the school roll, 16 are entitled to pupil premium funding. A few pupils are looked after by their local authority. A few pupils have education, health and care plans.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited classes at both sites and carried out most observations jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings and reviews of school documentation were conducted with senior leaders, a member of the human resources team, the Chief Executive Officer of the company and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Discussions were held informally with pupils and staff about their experiences in school.
- The inspector observed pupils arriving at school and at break, lunch time, and at the end of the school day.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's procedures for safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and those that are required to judge if the school meets the standards for independent schools.
- The pupils' work, and records about pupils' progress and teachers' planning, were also inspected.
- The inspector took account of the views of the nine completed staff questionnaires. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be published.

Inspection team

Steffi Penny, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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