

Liberty Lodge Independent School

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

Inspection dates

12–13 September 2017

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 proprietor has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met. Some policies and reports are not available.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is too generous. Improvement plans do not tackle all key issues.
- Staff performance is not reviewed systematically. The proprietor does not challenge leaders sufficiently.
- Leaders do not track pupils' attendance closely enough. Admissions registers are not compliant.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not suitably sharp to enable leaders to secure improvements quickly.
- Leaders do not monitor pupils' progress sufficiently well. Pupils do not make consistently good progress over time.
- Teachers do not expect enough of pupils. Teachers do not set work that helps pupils to make the progress they could.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not of a high quality.
- Staff do not challenge poor behaviour consistently. Leaders' records are not systematic. Some pupils' behaviour does not improve as quickly as it should.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. He and the proprietor are committed to ensuring that this becomes a good school.
- Some pupils who arrive with poor attendance records and a history of disrupted education attend well and successfully re-engage in learning.
- Where teachers plan work that matches pupils' needs, pupils make good progress over time.
- Teachers' recent planning and target-setting systems illustrate high expectations for pupils' personal and academic development.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and know how to stay safe.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership, management and governance, and ensure compliance with all of the independent school standards, by:
 - establishing clear systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school, including frequent and regular tracking of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour
 - making sure that self-evaluation is evaluative, based on evidence and linked to the strategic school improvement plan
 - updating the schemes of work to take account more closely of pupils' aptitudes
 - reviewing school policies more regularly, providing parents with written reports detailing pupils' progress and ensuring that the admissions register is completed accurately
 - establishing a performance management system so that all staff can be held to account for their contribution to school improvement, and ensuring that any training matches their individual needs
 - identifying a clear system whereby the proprietor can effectively provide to school leaders an appropriate degree of challenge and support.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make good progress from their starting points by ensuring that:
 - teachers use the information they collect on pupils when they arrive at the school and over time to set work that matches pupils' needs
 - pupils develop pride in their work.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - ensuring that staff consistently apply behaviour policies to help pupils improve their behaviour and attendance
 - insisting that all staff set appropriately high expectations of pupils' behaviour.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that:
 - a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively;
 - the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)).

- The proprietor must ensure that teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g), 3(h)).
- The proprietor must ensure that a framework for pupils' performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place (paragraph 4).
- The proprietor must promote good behaviour among pupils by ensuring that the written behaviour policy is implemented effectively, and a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour (paragraphs 9, 9(b), 9(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that an admissions and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15).
- The proprietor must ensure that the information, including that specified in subparagraph (3), is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate to include:
 - an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught, to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise;
 - particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils who speak English as an additional language (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(f), 32(3), 32(3)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and the proprietor have not measured the school's effectiveness closely enough against the independent school standards. Some of the independent school standards are not met.
- The school's self-evaluation does not accurately reflect the school's strengths or weaknesses. The development plan does not pinpoint what leaders need to do to develop a good school.
- The school's systems for monitoring teaching, learning and assessment over time lack consistency. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate picture of what teachers do well or what they need to improve. Performance management systems are currently underdeveloped.
- Since the previous inspection, not all of the areas for improvement listed in the report have been implemented. For example, leaders still do not measure pupils' progress regularly enough. This means that leaders do not have a precise picture of how well pupils achieve over time, and are unable to show the progress pupils make across different subjects. Leaders have recently changed the way that individualised programmes are set up for pupils so that academic and personal development can be more easily tracked.
- Although staff record how pupils behave, leaders have not logged incidents consistently well. Consequently, leaders have not been able to track pupils' behavioural patterns, act upon the information they collect or show improvements over time.
- Not all schemes of work take sufficient account of the ages and aptitudes of the pupils. The vast majority of pupils have an EHC plan and schemes lack the detail to show how teachers will plan learning to meet these pupils' needs.
- Leaders have not ensured that the admissions register is completed accurately, that annual reports to show pupils' progress are provided to parents or that there is a written policy for provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proprietor and the new headteacher have an ambitious vision for the school. They are both committed to ensuring that this becomes a good school.
- Staff are happy and feel valued. The results from the staff questionnaire were positive.
- There is a suitable curriculum whereby pupils focus on the core skills in English and mathematics.
- Pupils develop their creative and scientific skills through activity-based learning and projects. Fishing, crabbing and skateboarding trips build pupils' self-esteem and help them to successfully re-engage in learning.
- Leaders have recently introduced new pupil folders that include details of what pupils know and can do when they arrive at the school, with recommendations taken from each pupil's EHC plan. Staff are now able to set work that matches pupils' needs.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through curriculum topics. These allow pupils to explore what fundamental British values mean to them, help them to reflect on how their behaviour affects others and highlight the importance of tolerance towards those with different beliefs. There have been notable

successes where staff have supported pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to accept responsibility for their behaviour. These pupils have been able to return to mainstream education successfully.

Governance

- The proprietor, who provides the governance for the school, met regularly with the previous leaders and received updates on how well the school was doing. However, the proprietor did not hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance sufficiently well.
- Some of the independent school standards that were previously met are no longer met.
- The proprietor has ensured that the school has published a suitable safeguarding policy on its website.
- The proprietor has carried out all other statutory safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies reflect the latest statutory guidance and provide useful guidance to staff on all types of abuse. Staff are familiar with, and understand, the procedures to follow should they have concerns.
- The new headteacher, as the designated person for safeguarding, has undertaken suitable safeguarding training and safer recruitment training.
- The safeguarding culture within the school protects pupils and helps them to stay safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough. Work in folders is sometimes scruffy, incomplete and lacking in effort.
- Teachers provide feedback to pupils about their work. However, the lack of any meaningful follow-up means that pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Teachers do not set work that challenges pupils sufficiently well. This leads to inconsistencies in both the quantity and quality of work that pupils complete and the progress they make.
- Although some pupils' work showed evidence of good progress, staff do not always record this information accurately. Consequently, lesson planning does not take enough account of what pupils know and can do. This limits pupils' progress.
- The new headteacher has introduced academic, behavioural and activity targets for pupils. These are reviewed on a weekly basis, and it is intended that formal termly reports will show the progress pupils make from their starting points.
- New lesson plans show a sequence of lessons to help pupils make better progress. These include clear objectives, practice questions and ways in which pupils can apply the

knowledge practically, with useful resources to support learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not display positive attitudes to learning. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Previously, staff have not always been effective in helping these pupils to manage their behaviour, act responsibly and re-engage in learning.
- The admissions register is not accurate. Attendance registers are completed accurately, but previous leaders have not tracked the attendance of pupils effectively.
- Pupils cover topics in lessons linked to how to deal with bullying. There have not been any reported incidents of bullying since the previous inspection.
- Leaders assess site risks well and act upon their findings. Risk assessments are completed for school trips and record the potential risks, with suitable measures to control or reduce these.
- The new headteacher has introduced a unit of work aimed at improving pupils' self-confidence and self-awareness. Pupils cover topics including a 'classroom skills checklist' and 'the art of talking to teachers', helping them to think positively about how they might approach some situations differently.
- Policies for health and safety, fire risk and first aid are all up to date and ensure that the school complies with the regulations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils do not always behave well. There is no coherent system or central log in place to record incidents of poor behaviour, sanctions taken or outcomes. Consequently, leaders are not able to track pupils' behaviour, identify trends or show when improvements take place.
- A scrutiny of the attendance registers shows that pupils' attendance is too low. This limits pupils' progress. More recently, there have been some notable successes in getting pupils to come to school regularly. Parents are contacted to let them know how well their children are attending and making progress.
- The new headteacher has raised expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is now a consistent approach, linked to suitable sanctions and rewards, to help pupils improve their behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress over time.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work shows inconsistencies in terms of effort, quality and quantity. The work in folders shows that some pupils increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught, while others do not.
- Pupils are generally at the school on a short-term basis. Since the previous report, no pupils have completed nationally recognised qualifications.
- Recently, pupils who arrived at the school with a long-term history of disrupted education and poor attendance have made good progress. This is because they are interested in the work and it challenges them sufficiently. These pupils attend well, work hard and develop both socially and academically. This enables some pupils to reintegrate into mainstream education successfully.
- Some pupils have made good progress in English and mathematics. This helps to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education very well.
- Pupils follow a suitable programme of careers education, allowing them to search for jobs linked to their interests, identify the skills they will need and prepare their own career development plan. This prepares them well for when they leave the school.

School details

Unique reference number	136434
DfE registration number	935/6229
Inspection number	10038909

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Proprietor	Able Health Care Limited (with a single proprietor, Mrs A Kukadia)
Headteacher	Mr Jimmy Connor
Annual fees	£40,300
Telephone number	01473 218 814
Website	www.libertylodge.com
Email address	Jimmy.Connor@libertylodge.com
Date of previous inspection	8–9 December 2015

Information about this school

- Liberty Lodge is an independent special school that opened in 2010 for boys and girls aged between 11 and 16 years. The school provides education for up to six pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The school is owned and run by a single person under the proprietorship of Able Health Care Limited and occupies a large Victorian house in an urban location. The proprietor provides the governance for the school. There is no governing body.
- At its previous inspection, the quality of education provided at the school was judged to require improvement. Not all of the independent school regulations were met at that time.
- The school is led by a headteacher, who is also the class teacher, who started at the school in September 2017.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been three changes of headteacher.

- Pupils often present challenging behaviour. Many pupils have experienced personal traumas and disruption in their previous education. To date, all pupils have had statements of special educational needs or EHC plans.
- Local authorities fund pupils' placements at the school.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the school requested a material change to extend the upper age range of pupils to 17 years. At an additional inspection in December 2016, the inspector considered that the school was unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards should the material change be implemented.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector scrutinised records of current pupils and those who had attended the school previously. This included folders, class books, project work, records of attendance and assessment information.
- 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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the teaching assistant and the proprietor.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, on which to report. The inspector took account of two questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector held telephone conversations with the heads of virtual schools from two local authorities.

Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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