

Waterloo Lodge School

173 Preston Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 7AX

Inspection dates

1–3 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietor has not ensured that all independent school standards are met consistently.
- Those pupils who are lagging well behind in reading when they join the school do not make sufficient progress. Pupils' progress is hampered by the lack of a systematic approach to teaching reading.
- Leaders do not have an adequately detailed understanding of how subject teachers are assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Consequently, the data they gather does not always give the information they need about how well pupils are learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Many pupils have experienced years of educational failure prior to joining Waterloo Lodge. Almost all pupils embrace the 'last chance' which this school offers them. Pupils are proud of their achievements.
- From when they join the school, pupils quickly improve their attendance and behaviour.
- Pupils are generally pleasant and polite to staff, visitors and each other. Pupils are kind, considerate and quick to lend a hand.
- The designated safeguarding lead ensures that a culture of vigilance permeates the school. Leaders and staff follow up any concerns assiduously.
- Teaching staff help pupils 'plug most gaps' in their learning, tackle misconceptions and acquire key knowledge and skills in most subjects. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points, apart from in reading.
- The vast majority of pupils move on successfully to post-16 provision. Work experience, alternative provision and visits to colleges help pupils make well-informed choices about their next steps.
- Teachers plan lessons which engage and enthuse pupils. From their first days, pupils pay attention to their teachers, take pride in their work and show a willingness to 'have a go'.
- Relationships are a strength of the school. Adults work hard to build pupils' trust. They take time to listen to pupils and to get to know them well.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum. Pupils acquire traditional British values and learn to respect people different from themselves.

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?

- The proprietor, governors and senior leaders should use the independent school standards as a tool to help them monitor the school's effectiveness.
- Senior leaders should develop a systematic approach to teaching reading so pupils develop essential fluency and comprehension skills.
- Senior leaders should continue to develop the school's assessment procedures so that leaders and teachers have a deep and accurate view of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Recent changes in personnel, including staff, leaders and governors, mean that many people are new in post. While this is an exciting time for the school, it means that roles and responsibilities are not as clear as they were previously. A number of independent school standards were unmet at the start of the inspection. Leaders' actions ensured that these issues were resolved before the end of the inspection.
- Parents and carers, pupils and staff are very supportive of the school's senior leaders and their vision for the school. For many pupils, this school was their 'last chance'. Pupils talk about the positive difference the school has made to their lives. Parents value the willingness of staff to 'go the extra mile' to support their children and help them succeed.
- The school's broad curriculum enables pupils to gain some key qualifications, which will stand them in good stead when they leave the school. Leaders make sure that pupils are given opportunities to gain qualifications as they move through the school. This helps build pupils' self-confidence. Moreover, leaders recognise the importance of pupils getting qualifications 'under their belt', given many pupils' turbulent lives.
- All groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, benefit from the small-group teaching and a flexible curriculum.
- Leaders are in the throes of changing the school's curriculum in response to the introduction of the new national curriculum. Leaders are keen to align their curriculum offer to that in maintained schools to ensure continuity for pupils who join or leave the school at different times. Leaders are phasing these changes in, starting with core subjects. Currently, the curriculum lacks coherence in the promotion of reading.
- Staff morale is good. Staff appreciate the wealth of training which helps them to do their jobs well. Staff feel well supported by their leaders and managers. Leaders ensure that all staff take part in a comprehensive induction programme when they take up post. This programme prepares staff effectively for working at Waterloo Lodge.
- The school is held in high regard by local authorities. Leaders carry out their statutory duties for children looked after and pupils who have education, health and care plans. Information is shared with local authorities through regular reports and meetings. Leaders make sure that these vulnerable pupils get the specialist help and support they need.
- The core curriculum is complemented by a wealth of enrichment activities. Visits outside of school, coupled with visitors and workshops, increase pupils' enjoyment of school. Furthermore, this work is underpinning pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders use information from checks on the quality of teaching and learning to highlight areas for improvement. For example, following checks on pupils' books in the autumn term, leaders have worked with staff to embed the school's marking policy fully across school.
- Leaders recognise the pressing need to review and revise the school's approach to the teaching of reading and assessment. Leaders have taken time to evaluate different models to determine their preferred approach. They have implemented a new assessment

model for reading, writing and mathematics. However, it is too early for leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of this new system. In the meantime, teachers each use their own assessment systems to track pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Governance

- Recent personnel changes mean that the chair of the governing body has just been appointed. However, he knows the school well as its former executive headteacher. Governors are passionate about the school. They take a keen interest in pupils and staff. Governors are supportive of the headteacher.
- Governors have a range of valuable skills and expertise to support the leaders. They use a wealth of information to find out how well pupils are getting on. Governors use their frequent meetings to discuss the school's performance and hold leaders to account.
- Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They make sure that detailed records are kept of their meetings so that any actions are followed up effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead carries out his role and responsibilities meticulously. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. Ongoing training ensures that staff understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Staff make sure that they report any concerns swiftly to the designated safeguarding lead, who follows these up assiduously. Record-keeping is meticulous.
- Excellent staff and pupil relationships help pupils feel comfortable to share any worries or concerns with an adult in school. Staff make sure that pupils are given the information they need to help keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. Pupils reported that teachers act swiftly and effectively to nip any bullying in the bud. Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching at Waterloo Lodge is successful at re-engaging many pupils with learning and helping them to gain the skills and confidence that they need to move on successfully to further education, employment or training.
- Since the previous inspection, a number of new teachers have been appointed. Classrooms are a hive of activity. Teachers are passionate about their subjects and are keen to impart their knowledge to pupils. This enthusiasm is an important factor in reigniting pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Many teachers are at the early stages of their careers. Some have recently stepped up from teaching assistants to teaching roles. Others have recently qualified as teachers. These teachers value the support and training they receive to help them to do their jobs well.
- Teachers plan lessons which engage and enthuse pupils. Teachers' good subject

knowledge helps pupils build up their general knowledge. For example, a number of pupils talked knowledgeably about important historical events, such as the First World War, and famous artists, including Gaudi.

- Teachers use questioning techniques successfully to check pupils' understanding. This is particularly the case in mathematics. However, opportunities for pupils to consolidate their mathematical learning and deepen their understanding are limited.
- Although teachers use information about pupils' learning in lessons to give pupils detailed written feedback, in line with school policy, pupils do not always pay heed to this useful advice to improve their work.
- Teachers are consistent in their expectations for standards of presentation. Generally, pupils' books are well kept, pupils set out their work in line with school policy and pupils are proud to share their learning.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision flourish. Older pupils develop essential skills, which will help them cope well at college and in the workplace. Pupils enjoy the range of vocational courses on offer, which complement their academic studies at school.
- Subject teachers encourage pupils to read as part of their lessons, and so there are opportunities for pupils to read across the curriculum. However, the school does not have a systematic approach to teaching reading. Moreover, pupils are not encouraged to 'pick up a book'. Some pupils visit the public library, and others borrow books from the English classroom. However, there is no concerted effort to promote a love of reading and find genres and authors that 'hook' pupils into reading for pleasure.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They typically plan lessons which capture pupils' interests and are well matched to the learning needs of the majority of pupils. On occasions, opportunities are missed to move the most able pupils on more quickly in their learning and so challenge them to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers use a range of approaches to assess pupils' performance. This makes it tricky for leaders to check the reliability of information they have about pupils' progress and attainment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school. Pupils take time to trust adults when they join the school, but teachers and support staff work hard to build positive relationships. Staff provide excellent role models to pupils, setting the tone for the school.
- The school is highly successful in re-engaging pupils in education. Staff help to settle pupils into their new school. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. They find their lessons interesting, get on well with teaching staff and build lasting friendships.
- Pupils feel safe from bullying at the school. Any rare incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Staff challenge any occasional use of homophobic, racist or derogatory language robustly.

- Pupils enjoy the wealth of enrichment activities on offer. In particular, pupils look forward to the annual summer school. Pupils enjoy the range of outdoor and adventurous activities on offer, including climbing and canoeing.
- A number of pupils were at risk of criminal behaviour when they joined the school. Opportunities to hear first hand from people with experience of the criminal justice system deters pupils from following this path. Pupils are highly knowledgeable about the consequences of different crimes.
- The school makes sure that pupils have ample information and advice to help them decide what they want to do when they leave the school. The opportunity to attend different vocational training, coupled with work experience, enables pupils to learn what type of job would suit them best.
- The school is adapting to the different pupils' needs as the profile of new pupils changes. More pupils are joining the school from the start of key stage 3. In addition, there has been an increase in the proportion of these pupils who have mental health needs. It is early days, but leaders and staff are making the changes required to meet these pupils' needs. For example, leaders have reviewed and refined their approach to managing pupils' behaviour.
- Around half the pupils are children looked after. These pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities. Despite the challenges of liaising with so many different local authority officers, as well as social workers, foster carers and children's homes, the school works well with these partners. The school makes sure that it discharges all its statutory duties in a timely manner. Moreover, local authorities are pleased by the quality and quantity of information they receive about their pupils. As a result, children looked after are well cared for at the school.
- The designated safeguarding lead is highly knowledgeable about current and emerging risks to pupils. He ensures that there is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. During a recent workshop, pupils considered different scenarios, debating and deciding what might be the indicators of a potentially abusive relationship.
- Pupils are encouraged to keep themselves healthy. Pupils enjoy preparing healthy foods as part of food technology lessons. The school makes good use of the local leisure centre so that pupils can enjoy taking part in different sports, including swimming and football.
- The school's 14-19 coordinator keeps a close eye on the quality of education provided by alternative providers used by the school. Pupils are accompanied by school staff during these sessions. Staff ensure that pupils attend regularly, behave well and are kept safe while being educated off-site.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have a history of educational failure prior to joining the school. Almost all have been excluded from their previous schools and settings. Many have been out of lessons or out of school for weeks or months prior to starting at Waterloo Lodge. Despite these challenges, almost all pupils get off to a flying start at whatever point they join the school.
- The school's comprehensive induction programme helps pupils settle in quickly. Over the

past three years, pupils' attendance across the school has improved considerably. The attendance lead works hard to build good relationships with parents. He makes sure that he helps those families who struggle to get their children to school. Office staff make sure that any absence is followed up promptly. As a result, the majority of pupils are in school, on time, every day.

- Comprehensive training ensures that staff have the skills and expertise to deal well with any behavioural issues. Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure that lessons proceed without interruption. Staff have a range of strategies to help pupils' when they are struggling to regulate their own behaviour. Pupils and their parents described the positive difference the school makes to pupils' behaviour.
- The senior leaders responsible for behaviour ensure that every serious incident is followed up meticulously. They seek reassurance that restrictive physical intervention is a last resort and that staff adhere to the school's policy. Staff consistently follow the school's agreed procedures so that pupils are in no doubt of the consequences of their actions. As a result, the school is generally calm and orderly.
- Pupils are generally pleasant and polite to staff, visitors and each other. They hold doors open, say 'please' and 'thank you' and are quick to lend a helping hand when needed. Although, on occasion, pupils do use inappropriate language, most are quick to apologise.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Waterloo Lodge succeeds for pupils where many other schools have failed. Many pupils have been out of education for a long time before joining the school. Others may have attended a number of different schools previously. Pupils lag a long way behind the standard expected for their age when they join the school. Despite this, almost all pupils go on to gain some academic qualifications and move on successfully to education, employment or training.
- Teaching staff help pupils settle in quickly. They provide bespoke support to help pupils to be successful in the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to follow instructions, take turns to talk and 'have a go'. Teachers are quick to praise pupils when they are successful, which raises their self-esteem and increases motivation. This ensures that pupils start making academic progress within a short time of joining the school.
- Teachers are adept at developing personalised pathways for pupils. Staff tailor the courses available in school as well as at alternative providers and colleges to meet pupils' needs. Staff are determined to make sure that they keep every pupil engaged in education. This approach pays dividends, as the school helps the vast majority of its pupils find courses which engage and enthuse them.
- At key stage 4, pupils follow courses which lead to external accreditation, including functional skills qualifications and GCSEs. Leaders have recently introduced early entry to some external awards to provide encouragement for pupils and to make sure that, whatever may happen, pupils will leave school with some qualifications. This is key, given the turbulent lives some pupils lead. Almost all pupils leave school with qualifications that enable them to gain places on their chosen courses or training.
- Work in pupils' books, lesson observations and discussion with pupils all confirm that pupils make progress across the curriculum in key stage 3. In mathematics, teachers help

pupils 'fill the gaps' in their learning so that they have firm foundations on which to build. For some pupils, this means going back to place value, ordering numbers and times tables. In art, pupils are knowledgeable about different artists and their work. They are able to evaluate their work and use a range of different media skilfully. In history, pupils make connections between events and gain an understanding of the factors that led to significant events.

- Pupils manage to overcome their barriers to learning and gain skills which stand them in good stead for their next steps. However, most pupils join the school with reading abilities well below their chronological age and do not make the rapid progress required to develop the skills essential to read for both pleasure and information.

School details

Unique reference number	119853
DfE registration number	888/6026
Inspection number	10043370

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 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Chair	James Joyce
Headteacher	Debbie Procter
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,600
Telephone number	01257 230894
Website	www.waterloolodge.co.uk
Email address	admin@waterloolodge.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 January 2015

Information about this school

- Waterloo Lodge is an independent special school, which occupies a restored Georgian house near Chorley in Lancashire. Additional classroom space and offices have been created in the buildings around the house. The rear courtyard and side gardens have been adapted for recreational use, such as during breaks and lunchtime, by the pupils. A multi-use games area has been built at the rear of the school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 50 pupils aged from 11 to 18 years. The school applied to the Department of Education (DfE) for a temporary increase in numbers to 52 in 2015. The governing body has written to the DfE to request a material change to

increase its admission number to 52 permanently.

- Pupils join the school at different ages. More pupils have joined the school in Years 7 and 8 in recent years than at the time of the previous inspection. Most remain at the school until the end of Year 11. A very small minority of pupils stay at the school for Year 12. The majority of pupils are in key stage 4.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans for social, emotional and mental health needs. The needs of pupils have changed since the previous inspection. More pupils who have joined the school in recent years have mental health needs. A significant number of pupils have additional needs, including autistic spectrum disorders and specific learning difficulties.
- Pupils are placed at the school by 13 local authorities across the north-west region.
- Around half the pupils are children looked after.
- The school is part of a group of schools owned by Acorn Care and Education Limited. Acorn Care and Education Limited has recently merged with National Fostering Agency.
- The school uses four alternative providers: Cast North West, Achieve Training (Bury), Creativity Works (Preston) and Citywall (Salford).
- There have been a number of changes in leadership roles recently. These changes have involved senior leaders, governors and the proprietorial body. The executive headteacher has recently been promoted to a senior role in Acorn Care and Education Limited. He has also been appointed as chair of the governing body for Waterloo Lodge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, including joint observations with the headteacher and operations manager. Inspectors checked work in a range of pupils' books.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the chair and two members of the local governing body and three directors of the proprietorial body. An inspector spoke with representatives of placing local authorities.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning and assessment information.
- Inspectors spoke formally with pupils as well as informally during the school day and observed them during breaktimes.
- There were five responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors spoke to some parents by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke formally with a group of staff. Twenty-one members of staff provided written responses on their views of the school.
- An inspector visited two of the alternative providers with the school's 14–19 coordinator.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Shutt

Ofsted Inspector

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