

# TLC (The Learning Centre)

59 Queensway, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent BR5 1EB

## Inspection dates

5–7 June 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe are effective. As a result, pupils say they feel safe, secure and comfortable to be themselves at TLC.
- Teaching is effective. Pupils make good progress and achieve qualifications in a range of subjects.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and equality, very well.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next steps. Some return to their mainstream schools, others proceed to further education, training or employment.
- Pupils are respectful, willing to learn and proud of their achievements. They behave well. Pupils' attendance is typically better than previously.
- Parents and carers are generally very positive about the school.
- Leaders are in the process of reviewing their assessment system. It will track pupils' progress more thoroughly in all subjects, and in relation to their social and emotional progress.
- Governance is developing. The proprietor has very recently appointed three external professionals to form a management committee.
- Though the school has use of appropriate outdoor space, there is no timetabled daily use of it. Pupils need more regular opportunities to go outside for exercise and recreation.
- There are too few opportunities for teachers' professional development, for collaboration and even simply for staff to meet regularly as a team. This limits whole-school improvement.

### 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 effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the new arrangements for governance are effective in providing advice, holding leaders to account, and improving the school
  - opportunities for teachers, leaders and staff to meet, collaborate and engage in professional development are implemented, in order for all colleagues to be on the 'same page' and to contribute to whole-school development.
- Improve the quality of assessment, pupils' outcomes and personal development by ensuring that:
  - pupils' progress is accurately measured, recorded and reviewed in all subjects and in relation to their social and emotional development
  - pupils regularly and routinely spend time during the school day outside, for exercise, recreation and fresh air.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The proprietor and the centre manager share responsibility for providing a good education at TLC. They ensure that the quality of provision is good and that all the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils' families are generally overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents emphasised the unique and flexible nature of the provision; they repeatedly told the inspector that it is the first school in which their daughter has settled and enjoyed learning.
- The curriculum is effective in meeting pupils' needs and interests, and is currently under review because of the recent significant changes in cohort. It includes all the required areas of learning. Pupils in key stage 3 access the full national curriculum, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a number of accredited options, including six GCSEs. Subjects available include English, mathematics, science, art, health and social care, sociology, preparation for working life, humanities, physical education, cookery, and media and technology. The quality of careers education is adequate and is in the process of being strengthened.
- Staff support pupils effectively to become well-rounded citizens in modern British society. This is because pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a clear priority and every opportunity is taken, across the curriculum, to develop pupils' understanding of, and readiness for, the real world.
- Regular assemblies, a strong personal, social, health and economic education programme, and visits from speakers about, as examples, drug abuse, knife crime and safer sex, all have a positive impact on pupils' social awareness and understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- The school actively promotes equality and tolerance. The fact pupils feel comfortable enough to be openly gay and transgender in their school is testament to this.
- There are very few opportunities for teachers, and all staff, to meet, train and collaborate as a team. This limits opportunities for communication, training and whole-school development.

### Governance

- The arrangements for governance are new.
- The school's management committee will include external professionals from other schools and a charity. The committee's terms of reference are currently being developed.
- The plan is for committee members to formally and regularly review policies and to evaluate all aspects of the school, including safeguarding, pupils' progress and compliance with the independent school standards.

### Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- There is a shared culture of vigilance and care at TLC. The school's systems to ensure that pupils are as safe from harm as possible are strong, clear and understood by staff. Concerns are raised quickly and safeguarding leaders take the required action.
- The requirements for staff training, the documentation of concerns and actions taken, and in relation to liaising with local authorities and social care services when necessary, are all met.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and is readily available in hard copy, as the school has no website.

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

**Good**

- Teachers are as passionate about their subjects as they are about meeting pupils' complex needs. They have high expectations and strong subject knowledge.
- Focused planning and well-thought-through, engaging activities meet pupils' needs and interests, including the most able.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with their teachers. This enables them to successfully re-engage with learning, following their typically disrupted histories and negative experiences of mainstream education.
- Teaching is in very small groups, which pupils say gives them the level of support they need to learn effectively.
- Checks on pupils' skills are undertaken when pupils start at TLC, which helps teachers to plan effectively. Leaders then track and review pupils' progress in most subjects over time, using GCSE grades or national curriculum levels. Leaders have already begun to review and update their assessment system to thoroughly measure, and moderate, progress in all subjects.

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

**Good**

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe at TLC, and can be themselves there. Pupils routinely learn about how to keep themselves safe, including in relation to pertinent topics such as online safety, domestic abuse and sexual, and criminal, exploitation.
- Bullying is very rare. Name-calling and silliness are more commonplace, and effectively dealt with.
- The school reports pupils' good social and emotional development anecdotally. Leaders are currently developing a formal, objective and consistent system to identify pupils' starting points on entry and to record their subsequent personal progress.
- Physical education, which is off-site, is timetabled on a weekly basis. Although there is outdoor space available to pupils at the neighbouring church, there are no timetabled arrangements to take pupils off-site for fresh air, recreation or exercise.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations at TLC. They are respectful, friendly, welcoming and focused on their learning. They work hard and attend well to achieve accolades such as 'legend of the week' and to earn prizes from the Betty Boo box.
- Incidents of serious misbehaviour are rare. Fixed-term exclusions are used sparingly, and the use of physical intervention is exceptionally rare.
- The attendance and punctuality of the majority of pupils are good, but will always be a challenge for some. Too many pupils are persistently absent. However, these pupils typically arrive at TLC as non-attenders, school refusers and present extremely high levels of anxiety. Leaders do all they can, and are introducing unannounced home visits to strengthen their systems further, to support and challenge pupils and their families. As a result, pupils' attendance typically increases significantly in comparison to their previous placements.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Until recently, pupils have stayed for relatively short amounts of time at TLC and returned to their mainstream schools, or moved away from the area for a range of reasons. However, most pupils are now placed at TLC on a permanent basis. Either way, pupils have typically arrived, and continue to arrive, with very significant gaps in their education. From these usually low starting points, pupils make generally good progress academically, socially and emotionally, during their time at TLC.
- Where appropriate and where time permits, pupils achieve good outcomes in relation to their starting points at GCSE and in other entry-level qualifications. The projected outcomes for current Year 11 pupils are similarly good.
- The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. The Year 11 pupils who left the school in 2017 are now successfully learning in college placements or are training and working as apprentices.

## School details

Unique reference number	136228
DfE registration number	305/6081
Inspection number	10038173

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	One
Proprietor	Geraldine Kane
Headteacher	Geraldine Kane
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,000 to £39,000
Telephone number	01689 824463
Website	None
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@tlcthelearningcentre.com">admin@tlcthelearningcentre.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	21–22 October 2014

## Information about this school

- TLC is a small independent day school in the London Borough of Bromley.
- It provides permanent school placements and temporary alternative provision for girls with a range of complex needs, including learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school works with pupils excluded from, or at risk of exclusion from, schools in a number of local authorities in the vicinity. Some pupils on short-term placements are dual-registered.
- Almost all pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision. However, pupils attend weekly physical education sessions at the local gym facilities at Uppercutz gym, Whitebeam Avenue,

Bromley BR1 8DD.

- The school has one pupil on roll aged 18. The registration authority (the Department for Education) was only informed of this during the inspection and therefore the school is operating beyond the age range of its registration agreement.
- The school's previous inspection was a full standard inspection in October 2014.

## Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects, some jointly with the centre manager. He also observed an assembly.
- The inspector met with five pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning and their progress.
- The inspector jointly scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress, attendance and the quality of teaching.
- There was only one contribution to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, the inspector considered the school's own parental survey, spoke with four parents by telephone and also met with a parent.
- The inspector had meetings with staff, including two teachers and the school's leadership team, which comprises the centre manager and the proprietor. He also considered the nine staff surveys.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with a representative from a placing local authority and a member of staff from a local mainstream school which refers pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including school policies, logs, evidence of staff training and information related to safeguarding and health and safety.
- The inspector toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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