

Liberty Lodge Independent School

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

Inspection dates

29 November 2018

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(h)

- At the school's standard inspection in September 2017, the independent school standard in this paragraph about teaching was not met because pupils did not always behave well or make good progress over time. In the school's action plan, the proprietor undertook to ensure that staff would measure and record pupils' progress more precisely and use the information to plan activities to meet pupils' needs more closely. Additionally, staff would employ a range of strategies to ensure that pupils behave well.
- In the monitoring inspection in July 2018, the inspector found that staff were using a variety of methods to help pupils behave better. However, while some pupils responded positively, the behaviour of others was still not good. Some pupils were on reduced timetables and the limited amount of full-time supervised education they received meant that they did not make consistently good progress over time.
- Pupils now follow a curriculum better suited to their needs. They attend Rally Sport Engineering Academy one day each week and learn valuable practical skills that tie in with their future employment plans. As pupils are achieving more, they attend more often. Pupils now access full-time education regularly and are making better progress.
- Staff work well together in the school and know what pupils like. Teachers use pupils' areas of interest to make the learning interesting and to maintain their enthusiasm. They build strong relationships with pupils but keep a professional distance that allows them to insist upon high expectations and correct language. While teachers support and encourage pupils, they are not afraid to chivvy them along if they feel they are not working hard enough.
- The new rewards system, linked to the acronym 'water' checks pupils' 'work, attitude, targets, effort and readiness to learn'. This ensures that pupils are assessed daily. Pupils enjoy the new system. They like the rewards for behaving well and working hard and say that they help them to stay focused. School information shows that pupils' behaviour has improved over time.
- Pupils are developing the skills to become more independent learners. They now sit and read quietly on arrival so that they are ready to learn when lessons begin. The school is

now far calmer and more orderly, although some pupils still require plenty of encouragement to remain on task. The high-quality display work that pupils have produced on 'Elements' and 'Remembrance' showcases the progress that they have made.

- Work in pupils' books, the external assessments and talking to pupils show that they are making better progress. For example, pupils' written work, their use of descriptive language, their reading ages and evaluative skills show marked improvement. The improvements in their mathematical and problem-solving skills are less pronounced. The headteacher acknowledges that this is an area for continued focus.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), and 32(1)(c)

- At the school's standard inspection in September 2017 and at the subsequent progress monitoring visit in July 2018 these standards were met.
- The school's safeguarding procedures continue to be effective. The safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) and is available on the school's website.
- Processes for ensuring that pupils are safe and well looked after are clear and understood by staff. Pupils feel safe.
- These standards continue to be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18, 20, 21

- At the school's standard inspection in September 2017, and at the subsequent progress monitoring visit in July 2018, these standards were met.
- All of the necessary checks on staff are completed appropriately. A few small administrative errors were found on the school's register of pre-employment checks. These were rectified prior to the end of the inspection.
- These standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)

- In the monitoring inspection in July 2018, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) found that although leaders had made improvements, some standards were still not met. Using the baseline testing to establish exactly where pupils were in their learning, leaders were monitoring pupils' progress more closely and using this information to set appropriate targets. However, not all pupils met their targets, meaning some pupils did not make enough progress.
- In the school's action plan, the proprietor agreed to check on the school's effectiveness in meeting the previously unmet independent school standards through regular meetings with the headteacher.
- Leaders have taken effective action and the regular weekly meetings enable leaders and those responsible for governance to monitor the increasing effectiveness of the school.

The headteacher identifies some of the school's strengths but knows that staff cannot be complacent. The developments in teaching, learning, behaviour and leadership are promising but not yet fully established. Work on these aspects of school improvement is ongoing.

- The headteacher has reorganised pupils' learning so that it meets pupils' needs better. He has introduced a new rewards system that pupils like and staff use this consistently. Pupils now behave better, attend more often, work harder and make better progress.
- Parents feel proud of the changes they have seen in their children. They can see how well their children working, how much better behaved they are and how much their self-esteem has grown. As one parent said: 'The headteacher has stuck by my child through thick and thin. He has not given up on him and it has worked. I now have a completely changed boy.' Social workers and the head of the virtual school also spoke positively about the improvements they have seen both in the school and in pupils' work and demeanour.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance continue to develop their understanding of the independent school standards. They use previously unmet standards to help draw up their school improvement plans. However, leaders are not drawing upon external support to help them to evaluate key aspects of the school's effectiveness more closely.
- Leaders have ensured that this standard is now met.

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 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that the 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
 - utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(h)).
- 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 (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

School details

Unique reference number	136434
DfE registration number	935/6229
Inspection number	10083764

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2
Proprietor	Able Health Care Ltd – Aruna Kukadia
Headteacher	Mr James Connor
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,300
Telephone number	01473 233350
Website	www.libertylodge.com/school
Email address	ani@libertylodge.com
Date of previous standard inspection	12–13 September 2017

Information about this school

- The school is owned and run by a single person under the proprietorship of Able Health Care Limited. It occupies a large Victorian house in an urban location.
- The proprietor provides the governance for the school. The school is led by the same headteacher who was in place at the time of the two previous inspections, and who started at the school in September 2017.
- Pupils often present challenging behaviour and have experienced disruption in their previous education.
- The school uses Rally Sport Engineering Academy for alternative provision.
- All current pupils on roll have education, health and care plans.
- All of the pupils' placements are funded by local authorities.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous standard inspection.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection following the school's standard inspection in September 2017 and a previous monitoring inspection in July 2018.
- The inspection was conducted with no notice to the school.
- The Department for Education rejected the school's first action plan in December 2017. A second version was deemed acceptable in March 2018.
- During this inspection, the HMI held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils, a social worker and parents. He also held telephone conversations with the proprietor's representative and the virtual school head from a local authority.
- The HMI checked the school's safeguarding policy and website and the school's register for pre-employment checks.
- The HMI observed pupils learning, spoke to them to gauge their level of understanding, looked at a sample of their work and checked the findings against the school's assessment records.

Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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