

# Lime Meadows

Co Hexagon Care Services, Unit 1 Tustin Court, Port Way, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2YQ

## Inspection dates

15–17 January 2019

<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 leadership and management of Lime Meadows School are good. The proprietor, together with senior leaders, ensures that stringent safeguarding procedures are in place, and adhered to, and all independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils and form strong and trusting bonds with them.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' skills and abilities on entry to the school are accurate and effective, as are systems for monitoring their progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They move around the school sensibly and are respectful towards each other and adults. Pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy learning.
- Therapeutic support is highly effective. Pupils have regular access to staff and know that a 'listening ear' is always available.
- Sometimes teachers do not take advantage of training to improve their subject knowledge and teaching practice.
- Pupils benefit from an interesting curriculum, which stimulates their interests and ensures good progress. Many opportunities are available for pupils to engage in sports, visit museums and participate in outdoor adventure activities.
- The quality of teaching is good. This ensures that pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history and geography.
- Representatives from local authorities say that communication with the school is good. They are of the view that pupils are safe and making good progress, both socially and academically.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have a strong understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters and British values. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is less well developed.
- School improvement plans lack precision. This limits somewhat the school's further development.

### 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 leadership, management and governance, by:
  - sharpening improvement plans to better aid the school's further development
  - ensuring that staff take advantage of training opportunities to improve their teaching practice and awareness of current developments in education
  - enhancing pupils' appreciation of the culturally diverse nature of British society.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The proprietor knows the school well. He works closely with senior leaders to ensure that during this transitional period, staffing changes do not adversely impact on pupils' personal, social and educational development. The school is currently being led and managed by the head of school, who is responsible for managing all Hexagon schools. Together with the proprietor, leaders work effectively to ensure that all independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders, supported by the proprietor, ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are good. They make sure that learning takes place in a safe and secure environment and pupils benefit from an interesting curriculum, which is specifically tailored to meet their needs. The high expectations staff have of pupils supports pupils' strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and history.
- Leaders regularly monitor teachers' practice and talk with pupils about their learning. In addition, leaders look at the quality of work in pupils' books and check the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work.
- Staff morale is high and relationships with pupils are solid and purposeful. Teachers' strong bonds, ability to spot potential 'flash points' and consistent application of the school's rewards and sanction policy all help to ensure that Lime Meadows is a purposeful school where pupils want to learn.
- The therapeutic team work closely with teachers and senior leaders to help pupils manage and understand how their previous experiences impact on their behaviour and attitudes to learning. All staff are aware of pupils' psychological profiles, which are based on initial assessments made when pupils enter the school. Pupils say they like having someone to talk with and discussing their concerns helps them 'calm down' and focus on their work. This effective relationship helps to build pupils' confidence and ability to manage relationships and interactions with others.
- Pupils benefit from a stimulating curriculum, which helps them to develop their reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills across a wide range of subjects. The school's work to promote reading is highly effective, ensuring that books are of interest to pupils and providing many opportunities for pupils to read in class.
- Teachers' work to develop most aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know of the major world faiths. They learn about Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, and visited a Buddhist Centre and the Jewish Museum in Manchester. Pupils enjoy visiting the theatre and cinema, and their many educational visits to destinations, such as Jodrell Bank and Styal Mill and Museum. Pupils fervently debate ethical issues such as embryo testing and religious and ethical views relating to organ donation.
- Initiatives to enhance pupils' appreciation of British values are effective in consolidating their understanding of democracy, the rule of law and civic responsibility. Pupils have a deep empathy with those less fortunate than themselves. They raise money for various charities and are aware of important commemorative events, such as Remembrance Day.

Pupils engage in ethical discussions relating to issues, such as supermarket food waste and the impact of illegal drug use on the individual and society. However, pupils' appreciation of embracing cultural diversity is not as well developed as their understanding of other aspects of British values.

- Representatives from local authorities are very positive about Lime Meadows. Those I spoke with said that the school always provides up-to-date information on how well pupils are doing. They are of the view that pupils settle in quickly and make good progress. Representatives describe the school as, 'responsive, well organised and nurturing', and say that staff allay parents' anxieties during discussions about their children's placements at the school.
- Hexagon offers a range of professional development and training, aimed at ensuring that staff have a good knowledge and understanding of conditions, such as dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and dyscalculia.
- Regular meetings are held to enable teachers to share ideas and their experiences with colleagues in other Hexagon schools. However, training to support teachers so they are at the cutting edge of developments in teaching and their respective subjects are not as comprehensive as they could be. In addition, school improvement plans, including senior leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, lack some precision, which somewhat limits the further development of the school's work.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor is responsible for the direct line management of the head of school. The head of school manages and supports all Hexagon school headteachers. The proprietor reports on the work of schools to the heads of the various services within the Hexagon care group.
- The proprietor has high aspirations for the school. He is kept abreast of developments in the school through regular meetings with the head of school and reports from the headteacher.
- The proprietor has had appropriate safeguarding training, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty, which is part of the government's agenda for tackling racism and extremism. The proprietor takes a keen interest in the school and regularly meets both teachers and pupils.
- Visits, coupled with the headteacher's reports and details of pupils' achievement, enable the proprietor to reach a view on the quality of education in the school. However, school improvement plans lack clarity.
- The proprietor has taken decisive action to support leaders and staff during the current period of staffing change.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All pupils at the school are potentially vulnerable. The school ensures that none have unsupervised access to the internet. Pupils are not allowed access to mobile phones. Such actions help to ensure pupils' safety. A wide range of risk

assessments are in place. These help to ensure that pupils are safe when out in public and when moving around the school. All pupils have their own individual risk assessments. Staff are familiar with these. Their knowledge ensures that pupils are always safe.

- Well-established procedures are in place to record any concerns raised by staff. The designated safeguarding leader is trained to a high standard. All staff know how to spot signs of neglect and/or abuse. Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children.
- The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and current. It is available to parents on request. Staff are familiar with the school's policies and government guidelines, including the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education. All staff have had 'Prevent' duty training.
- There is a positive culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies to keep pupils safe and secure.

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

**Good**

- Teachers ensure that pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils' workbooks contain many examples of thought and insightful work on various topics. In geography, good teaching ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of natural disasters, such as the Boscastle and Crackington Haven flood of 2004, and a full appreciation of the importance of sustaining Amazonian rain forests and conserving the environment.
- Teachers make sure pupils have many opportunities to read. As a result, pupils are developing into confident readers, who often read for extended periods in class. Pupils are especially fond of spy novels. They are adept in identifying the conventions of such novels and say that a good spy story must contain adventure, danger, gadgets, a love interest and 'baddies'.
- Science teaching is highly effective. As a result, pupils' knowledge of scientific principles is good. Pupils are particularly interested in, and have a strong knowledge of, biology. This was evident during the inspection, when pupils sensibly discussed fertilisation. After completing an activity to identify various words associated with reproduction, pupils demonstrated their maturity as they discussed morning sickness and why women do not produce eggs during pregnancy.
- Teachers are not afraid to tackle challenging topics, such as the rise of Nazism in Germany prior to the Second World War. Pupils enjoy debating and know there are different points of views in relation to significant events in world history. Pupils' visits to air raid shelters in Stockport, the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds, and the Jorvik Viking Centre all help to bring learning to life and consolidate their understanding in history.
- Pupils have good computing and information and communication technology skills. Most know how to create and manipulate simple programmes. All have well-developed word-processing skills and can utilise various database and desktop publishing packages. Supervised, pupils regularly explore the internet to secure information to help them complete various tasks and assessments in different subjects.

- Pupils know the importance of mathematics. They skilfully apply their calculation skills to various practical activities. This is evident in pupils' work folders. Pupils are adept in calculating costs for various events, including parties. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated their ability to work out the cost of two people travelling to London for a weekend break. They had to factor in hotel accommodation, a West End show and evening meals. All pupils successfully planned their weekend within the confines of a given budget.
- Teachers adhere to the school's feedback and assessment policy, offering useful advice to pupils on how to improve their work. Discussions revealed that pupils have a developing appreciation of what they need to do to further improve their learning in subjects such as English, mathematics, science, history and geography.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The headteacher liaises with each pupil's social worker prior to admittance to the school. This helps the school to establish pupils' aspirations and provides an opportunity to discuss plans which will support pupils to achieve to their very best.
- Pupils know what it takes to become confident and resilient learners. During their time in school they develop strategies to help them persevere with challenging work and learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils value their regular therapy sessions. Talking and play therapies, and a blend of different approaches, provide pupils with coping strategies, which can be put into effect when they find concentrating and behaving well in class difficult. Pupils are also well equipped to use transport independently and interact with people confidently when they are out in public.
- Pupils become increasingly proud of their achievements and those of others. The school's token system, rewards for good behaviour, is highly effective. At the end of each lesson, pupils are eager to find out how many tokens they have earned. The tokens are a powerful aid to good behaviour and create healthy competition between pupils.
- Pupils know what bullying is and say that it rarely happens. They learn about racism and homophobic bullying, through the personal, social, health and citizenship aspects of the curriculum.
- Pupils know about the dangers of illegal drugs, tobacco and alcohol. They appreciate the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Pupils know how these contribute to effective learning. Pupils learn about sexual health and contraception. They develop 'forest skills' during various outdoor activities, where they can hone their teamwork and leadership skills.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet, which is limited and closely monitored by staff.
- Pupils benefit from good independent careers advice from specialist personal advisers. Pupils attend various career and employment fairs and have recently 'tasted' life in higher education. Pupils are supported when preparing personal statements. They learn

good interview techniques, including how best to present themselves to others.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are confident and well-mannered when speaking with visitors. They are keen to discuss their achievements and interests. Pupils rarely miss school. Their attendance improves as soon as they settle and participate in lessons. This helps to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged by poor attendance.
- Pupils are very disciplined and are keen to engage in sporting activities, such as football, basketball, archery and golf. Those I spoke with said they enjoy cooperating and competing with their peers in such activities.
- Throughout the course of the inspection, pupils' behaviour was good. They move around the school sensibly and ensure that buildings and premises are tidy and looked after well.
- Pupils' behaviour in class was good. Prompt action by staff ensures that there is minimal disruption to pupils' learning. An 'intervention room' is available for pupils to work independently and have 'time out', if they feel unable to work with others. Pupils are offered counselling and support, which helps them to reintegrate back into class quickly.
- Pupils behave sensibly at lunchtime, where they enjoy eating a healthy meal and talking with their peers and staff. Staff manage behaviour effectively. They know pupils well and understand each pupil's specific needs. This helps to avoid situations in which pupils feel under pressure to respond to staff requests inappropriately.
- Pupils say behaviour is usually good, stating that, 'We all get on really well when we get to know each other.' The school's records indicate that pupils' behaviour improves during their time at the school. Evidence for this is in the school's incident books, which show that the frequency with which pupils are sanctioned decreases over time.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Almost all pupils start school with skills and abilities below those typically expected for their age. The results of initial assessments of pupils' basic skills, including speaking, listening, writing and mathematics, made shortly after they are admitted, provide useful baseline information for senior leaders and teachers. Such information helps staff to develop tailored programmes of learning for each pupil.
- Pupils' work is regularly assessed. A few pupils take GCSEs in English and mathematics. However, most are continually assessed for the units of work they complete in various subjects. Teachers prepare pupils well for such units. This was evident during the inspection where pupils did further work on fractions. The fluency and confidence they gained helped them complete different, challenging problem-solving activities.
- End-of-unit assessments in history, on topics such as Germany's defeat in the Second World War, demonstrate pupils' good understanding of historical events. They know which countries were included in the Triple Entente and Triple Alliance during the Second World War and are currently learning about the strategic nature of these alliances. Good teaching ensures pupils' strong progress in this subject.
- Assessments in science are thorough, demonstrating pupils' ability to engage in

investigative activities, such as using a thermometer to measure the boiling points of different liquids. Pupils' good progress in science is shown in their Oxford, Cambridge and RSA continuous assessments. Pupils have a good understanding of the biology of different plants and animals. They identify different types of cells, describing their structure and function.

- The monitoring of pupils' performance over time is comprehensive. Pupils engage in 'bite size' activities. Such activities become increasingly challenging as pupils work their way through various syllabi. This is evident in pupils' geography books. Units initially focus on facts and figures about topics, such as population growth from the early 1900s, before moving onto more searching questions which require pupils to think deeply about the reasons behind such growth.
- Monitoring of progress in mathematics indicates that from their individual starting points, pupils make good progress. Pupils have a secure understanding of the characteristics of different shapes. Given limited information, they can measure and work out the perimeter of squares, rectangles and triangles.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan are especially well supported. Assessments and workbooks indicate their good progress. Teachers are aware of pupils' targets and ensure that timely support is available to ensure that pupils make the good progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' progress in English is strong, and their attainment is improving. Pupils have a lot to write about, including their many educational visits. Teachers focus on helping pupils to improve their comprehension skills and extend their vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to find out about the lives and times of world leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, in their factual writing books.
- Teachers place a strong focus on developing pupils' reading skills. They use various strategies to help pupils to improve their reading, including phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). Pupils enjoy reading; their comprehension skills and vocabulary are good, as is their appreciation of poetry and the work of different authors.
- Those who left the school at the end of Year 11 in 2018 were well equipped with the skills needed for the next stage of their learning, training and/or employment. In 2018, all enrolled on post-16 courses in areas such as motor vehicle engineering.



## School details

Unique reference number	130913
DfE registration number	357/6056
Inspection number	10067887

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 special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Francis Ashcroft
Headteacher	Karen Barber
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,940
Telephone number	0161 339 7368
Website	<a href="http://www.hexagoncare.com">www.hexagoncare.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:limes.headteacher@hexagoncare.com">limes.headteacher@hexagoncare.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–19 October 2016

## Information about this school

- Lime Meadows is one of a small number of schools which, together with other services, forms part of the Hexagon Care Group. Due to the vulnerable nature of pupils, the school does not have a dedicated website. General information about schools and services is available on Hexagon's website.
- The school aims to, 'assist young people in coming to terms with their own abuse and trauma as well as their offending' and '... support young people to develop empathy and respect for others by promoting positive relationships and behaviour'.
- The school provides specialist education and therapeutic services for up to six boys aged 11 to 18. All pupils have complex emotional, mental health, social and behavioural needs.

- Some pupils have an EHC plan. The school does not use any alternative providers. Currently, no pupil is over the age of 16.
- The school does not have a governing body. The headteacher and head of school report to the proprietor.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was not in school. The school is led by the head of education, who is responsible for managing all Hexagon schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects, including English, science, history, geography and mathematics. Pupils' work and assessment folders were scrutinised during observations and separately.
- Meetings were held with the head of education, teachers and members of the therapeutic team. A telephone conversation was held with the proprietor and representatives from local authorities.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to be considered. Informal discussions were held with pupils throughout the course of the inspection.
- The inspector examined a range of documentary evidence. This included checks on the quality of teaching; safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments; various records of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; development plans and the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's development plans and reviews of its own performance.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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