

Cedar Lodge

c/o Hexagon Care Services, Unit 1 Tustin Court, Port Way, Preston, Lancashire PR2 2YQ

Inspection dates

11–13 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The proprietor and school leaders have created an ethos of high expectations for pupils and staff where only the best will do. They have ensured that all regulatory requirements of the independent school standards have been met.
- The headteacher has ensured that the required improvements identified at the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. High expectations for achievement and equality of opportunity are shared and upheld by all.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. As a result, outcomes for pupils have improved so that they are now outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Learning time is used to the full. Lessons are interesting, pupils are keen to learn and, as a result, they make rapid progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and rarely miss a day. Attendance levels are high and pupils' attendance continues to improve the longer they are at the school.
- Staff have excellent subject knowledge. They use it effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Just occasionally, learning opportunities are missed when pupils are given insufficient time to reflect on a question they have been asked during question and answer sessions.
- The rich curriculum and the outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contribute to pupils' excellent personal development.
- The school's coordination of multi-agency work is highly effective and ensures that pupils' individual needs remain at the centre of any decisions that are made.
- The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives as British citizens.
- The school provides a secure setting where pupils feel safe. Arrangements for managing risk, safeguarding and pupils' welfare are exemplary.

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 teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - providing pupils with sufficient time to reflect on and answer questions that have been posed by ensuring that teachers do not intervene too soon.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The school's mission of 'Creating positive futures together' underpins everything that happens at Cedar Lodge. The proprietor and school leaders set the highest aspirations for all pupils who attend the school.
- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. She has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and is very perceptive about any weaknesses. She takes effective action in response to weaknesses, including those identified during the last inspection. For example, there has been rapid improvement in both the assessment of pupils' learning and the teaching of the computing curriculum, which is now a strength.
- Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum that is carefully designed to meet their individual, complex needs. Many pupils arrive at the school after experiencing difficulties in their previous schools and settings, with some having gaps in their learning. The curriculum successfully fills these gaps as well as developing pupils' social, emotional, communication and life skills.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities. They spoke enthusiastically to the inspector about the many opportunities afforded to them, which include visits to outdoor education centres, sporting and leisure activities, as well as museums and places of worship. Such activities promote pupils' self-esteem and develop an understanding of how they need to behave and react in different situations.
- Pupils' premium funding is used well to provide additional resources and support for pupils who are eligible to receive it. For example, personal tablets, laptops and music equipment were purchased following a discussion that took account of pupils' and care workers' views. Local authorities that fund pupils' places check on how the funding is being used and ensure that it is making a difference for pupils.
- Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and the promotion of British values are threaded sensitively throughout the curriculum according to pupils' understanding and need. The curriculum celebrates different beliefs and cultures as well as promoting equality of opportunity and diversity. Pupils learn about the rule of law and the court system. Many understand the impact their actions can have on others within the school community. They learn to moderate their behaviour by showing more tolerance and respect. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their future lives.
- Leader have ensured that there is a shared commitment across the school community to enable each pupil to succeed. Excellent working relationships with residential care staff, therapists, social workers and other professionals help to ensure that pupils' wider needs are met through working in multi-agency teams.
- Staff are very effective role models in showing pupils, through their own actions and behaviour, how to form positive working relationships and get on with each other. Feedback from local authority officers who place pupils in the school confirm the positive improvements most pupils make in their behaviour, attitudes to learning, attendance and self-esteem following their placement at Cedar Lodge. They also comment on the responsiveness of the school leadership in tailoring the curriculum for the individual

pupils.

- High-quality training is made available for all staff. They comment positively about the support and training culture within the school and the wider company. It enables them to pursue courses and attend workshops that enhance their subject knowledge and expertise to provide the very best for the pupils. This commitment is paying dividends, with inspection evidence pointing to improvements in many areas.
- Systems to manage the performance of staff are rigorous. The headteacher scrutinises information about pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching in great detail. Evaluations are accurate and used well to inform key priorities and refine actions so that the school becomes even more effective. Staff who spoke to the inspector praised the school for the support they receive and commented on the high morale and the excellent teamwork. They say this helps them to meet the high standards expected of them.

Governance

- The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.
- The proprietor has an excellent understanding of pupils with complex needs, including their learning needs, and is committed to supporting them.
- He is well supported by the head and deputy head of education for Hexagon Care Services, which provide the link between the proprietor and the day-to-day running of the school. Excellent communication systems ensure that leaders have a detailed knowledge of individual pupils and the progress they are making.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, jointly agreed with the headteacher and Hexagon Care Services senior staff, is incisive and focuses on the right priorities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding which permeates the school. Staff understand the need to protect pupils against all potential risks.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is prominent in the curriculum to help keep pupils safe. The school has secure systems in place to prevent pupils from accessing inappropriate material on the internet.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are kept up to date in line with current government legislation and guidance. All staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. This high-quality training provides staff with the skills and confidence to take rapid action when concerns arise.
- The school does not have a website, but all the required safeguarding information is available on request. Evidence from the inspection confirms that these policies are implemented effectively. Pupils confirmed that they feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have high aspirations for pupils and expect them to work hard. Pupils respond well to these expectations and, as a result, there is a very positive learning atmosphere where doing well is celebrated.
- Excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on their learning and accept that individuals learn in different ways and at different speeds. Pupils demonstrate high levels of concentration, readily ask for help and progress rapidly in an environment of mutual respect.
- Accurate assessments are undertaken when pupils join the school so that staff can identify the support and care that they need. This information is used well by all staff, including therapists, and is incorporated into the activities that are planned. Through working successfully as part of a multi-agency team, teachers can recognise when pupils' social or emotional needs are affecting their learning and adjust tasks accordingly.
- Lessons are very well planned and teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Some teaching staff move between two schools within the Hexagon Care Services group of schools. Consequently, their complementary expertise is shared and is available for pupils at Cedar Lodge. This means that all curriculum areas are covered well, a fact appreciated by the pupils themselves. As one pupil stated, 'We are really lucky to have different teachers who know so much about all the subjects.'
- Staff are skilled at asking questions to check on pupils' current levels of understanding so that they can pitch the next set of tasks at the right level. Just occasionally, learning opportunities are missed. This happens when staff are keen to move on with a topic and answer questions for the pupils before they have had sufficient time to reflect on the answers themselves.
- For many pupils, gaps in their knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics have held them back in the past. These gaps are soon spotted by staff, and are tackled sensitively with materials and tasks set at just the right level. This helps to restore pupils' confidence in their own abilities and encourages them to tackle more challenging tasks. For example, in English lessons pupils were able to discuss a Thomas Hardy text as part of their preparation for GCSE examinations. Despite the difficulty that they found with some of the language, pupils engaged in a healthy discussion about why anyone would be forced to 'sell off' their wife and child. As well as expressing their own views, pupils listened attentively and respected the view of others.
- Teachers make excellent use of digital technology to support and monitor pupils' learning. The lead teacher for computing has designed an in-house system where pupils' individual work is stored online and pupils are able to access any worksheets or written tasks that they need to complete. Using the same system, staff check on progress, provide feedback and ensure that the right levels of challenge are set. Pupils say that they enjoy the independence that they feel they have gained by working in this way because it means they have to be organised and self-motivated.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour in lessons very effectively. They quickly identify when pupils are in danger of losing focus or becoming disengaged. Teachers are calm and insistent with pupils, address any problems and support pupils to overcome any issues. As a result, no lesson time is lost and learning is not disrupted for other pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- In their conversations with the inspector, in their written statements and in the manner that they conduct themselves in the classroom, pupils make it clear what a positive impact Cedar Lodge has had on their lives. 'I didn't realise just how good I could be at school until I came here,' is typical of the comments made.
- This transformation is echoed in the comments made by local authority placement officers and social workers, who remark on the positive impact the school has had on building pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They develop into resilient and reflective individuals who are proud of their school and of their own achievements
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect to staff and to each other. They follow teachers' instructions and ask for help when needed. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and maintain their levels of concentration for increasingly longer periods. As a result of their positive attitude to learning, pupils make rapid progress.
- Staff keep pupils safe and help them to develop a good awareness of the risks to their personal well-being and safety both in and beyond the school. Pupils have learned about e-safety, including cyber-bullying, and understand how to keep themselves safe online. They also know how to report their concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and responsibly. The school is an orderly environment, where pupils learn and make impressive progress. The warm and trusting relationships between staff and pupils help to promote such positive behaviour.
- Some pupils said they were pleased with their conduct at this school because in their previous school they did not always behave as well as they should have done. 'Teachers really get on with us here and treat us respectfully. They have time for us,' is how many pupils describe their experiences.
- Incidents of bullying and any other forms of discriminatory behaviour are rare, and pupils are clear about how incidents will be dealt with. They are confident that staff will follow up any concerns that are raised. Records show that detailed records are kept of any investigations carried out by staff.
- Attendance rates are high and punctuality is exemplary. When pupils first start at the school, they have often missed education in their previous school or setting. However, staff work successfully to remove any barriers to learning or attending. Pupils enjoy lessons and, as a result, their attendance improves rapidly. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, outcomes for pupils have improved rapidly. Evidence from pupils' individual progress files, previous test results, observations of their work in lessons and scrutiny of their work confirms that pupils of all abilities are making outstanding progress over time.
- Pupils arrive at school at various ages and with mixed experiences of education. For many, there have been disruptions at their previous schools and settings and most have below-average starting points.
- Pupils settle quickly due to the excellent transition arrangements. They make rapid progress in a calm environment and follow a curriculum which is tailored to meet their particular needs. Pupils also benefit from the support of highly knowledgeable staff, who understand their learning needs very well.
- Pupils soon develop much more positive attitudes towards learning. In turn, they begin to succeed both academically and in their personal development, resulting in improved self-confidence and self-esteem. 'I didn't realise what exams I needed to pass to get to college before I came here. That's why I'm working harder now,' is typical of the comments made by pupils to the inspector.
- There is a strong emphasis on improving pupils' basic literacy and mathematical skills across all subjects. Growing success in these areas enables pupils to build on their knowledge and skills and apply their learning across the curriculum. Most read confidently and fluently, with a range of increasingly challenging texts.
- Impressive computing skills are a feature of pupils' learning at Cedar Lodge. Many are beginning to write programs using different scripting language and some are designing their own web applications. Pupils recognise how this will help them as they move towards college and the world of work.
- Staff have high aspirations for their pupils. Throughout the year groups, pupils are encouraged to study for qualifications and the school prepares them well for examinations. For example, current pupils are working towards achieving Functional Skills Certificates, entry-level qualifications and GCSEs.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment when they leave. They receive high-quality, independent careers advice and the school has established good links with a recruitment agency. This has enabled all pupils to gain practical experience of interviews and writing letters of application. Strong links with local colleges of further education, including help with supported transitions, has allowed most pupils to successfully register for a course of their choice.

School details

Unique reference number	131379
DfE registration number	354/6036
Inspection number	10092575

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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Francis Ashcroft
Headteacher	Helen Flood Copete
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,940
Telephone number	03336006600
Website	None
Email address	cedarlodge.headteacher@hexagoncare.com
Date of previous inspection	1–2 March 2017

Information about this school

- Cedar Lodge is a small, independent special school with associated residential accommodation for pupils with complex needs, including learning needs, between the ages of 11 to 18.
- There are currently six pupils on roll. Three pupils have an education, health and care plan. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in key stage 5.
- The school is part of Hexagon Care Services group. They operate schools and care homes around the country.
- The proprietor, the head of education and the deputy head of education for Hexagon Care Services provide governance for Cedar Lodge.

- Places are funded through local authorities.
- No alternative provision is used by the school.
- The school does not have a website.
- The school's last standard inspection was in March 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils learning in different subjects. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with Hexagon Care Services education staff, the assistant manager of a care home, therapy staff, the headteacher and staff.
- The inspector had telephone conversations with the proprietor and local authority representatives that place pupils at the school. He also took account of written submissions from local authority representatives and social workers who work with the pupils.
- The inspector met with pupils both formally and informally. He looked at pupils' work and the school's records of their progress. He also listened to individual pupils as they read in class.
- There were insufficient responses to generate a report from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector took account of two free text responses to Parent View.
- The inspector took account of staff views following discussions with them. There were no responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the appropriate regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Mike Hewlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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