

Inspection of Waterloo Lodge School

173 Preston Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 7AX

Inspection dates: 12–14 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff support pupils to achieve and succeed. Staff help pupils to believe in their own abilities and to grow in confidence. Pupils are extremely positive about the school. They say, for example, 'being here has changed me for the better'. The school has a positive atmosphere and pupils feel safe and cared for. Pupils are friendly and socialise together. They show respect for differences between people.

Staff develop constructive relationships with pupils. They have a good understanding of pupils' anxieties and vulnerabilities. They are skilled at helping pupils to calm down and adapt their own behaviour. Staff deal with incidents of poor behaviour patiently and skilfully. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with any bullying effectively.

Teachers adapt activities to meet each pupil's learning and social needs. Staff place a strong emphasis on helping pupils to manage risks that they may experience. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. They know how to keep healthy and well.

Pupils are keen to learn because staff plan an interesting and worthwhile curriculum. Pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning improve because of the work of staff. Pupils would welcome further opportunities to contribute positively to the work of the school and share their ideas.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The proprietor, leaders and governors make sure that all the independent school standards are met. The school complies fully with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Senior leaders provide clear direction to the work of the school and maintain a calm and positive atmosphere throughout the premises. Staff complete a range of valuable training to develop their knowledge and skills. They share ideas and work together effectively.

Leaders and teachers plan the curriculum around each pupil's specific needs, supplemented with specialist support and therapy where needed. The curriculum is interesting, relevant and enjoyable. Pupils take a range of GCSE, functional skills and vocational subjects suited to their abilities, including in English and mathematics. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps. When they leave school, they typically attend sixth form, further education courses or participate in work-based learning.

Pupils are particularly inspired about their learning in art, food technology, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and vocational subjects. Their learning is enriched with outdoor education, through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, educational trips and visits. The well-planned curriculum supports pupils who have struggled in other settings to re-engage in education and to experience success.

Careers education is a strength. Pupils receive expert advice and are encouraged to

be ambitious about their careers. Leaders arrange work-based learning and vocational courses to support pupils' aspirations. Currently, pupils are completing courses in performing arts, construction, motor vehicle studies, and hair and beauty.

Leaders have introduced a number of measures to improve the teaching of reading. Each pupil's reading and spelling skills are assessed in depth when they start at the school. Teaching staff have had training in how to make reading resources more accessible for pupils. Pupils use an online programme to help them to practise reading and spelling. In English lessons, pupils' reading skills are developed well and pupils read a range of texts successfully. However, pupils are not enthusiastic or confident readers.

Pupils often have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and skills when they join the school. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and skills in depth. They plan teaching that builds on pupils' learning and addresses gaps effectively.

PSHE and creative arts are popular and the curriculum in these subjects is highly relevant to pupils' lives. PSHE makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils discuss topical issues, sex and relationships, and moral dilemmas maturely. Pupils receive high-quality, professional tutoring in creative arts at an alternative provider. Pupils grow in confidence as they perform and record their own creative work.

Staff know pupils extremely well and adapt the curriculum to their needs. Teachers are skilled and they make learning interesting and relevant. Learning support staff help pupils to learn effectively in lessons. However, leaders do not always make best use of the skills of these staff in lessons and in individual support.

Leaders work in close partnership with local authorities, social care and health services, carers and families to make sure each pupil's learning, social and emotional needs are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety, health and well-being are a priority for everybody at the school. Staff are aware of pupils' vulnerabilities and are vigilant. They take immediate action if there are any concerns. Leaders work closely with a range of agencies to safeguard pupils and minimise risks. Staff and governors have completed all the required training in safeguarding. They have completed additional training to support pupils' specific safeguarding needs. Records of incidents are detailed and fit for purpose. Pupils' attendance at school and alternative provision is checked daily. Any absence is followed up immediately. Safeguarding policies and safe recruitment procedures are thorough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

Information for the school and proprietor

- The teaching of reading has improved since the last inspection. However, some of the improvements are too recent to have had a full impact across the school. The new assessment system is not yet being used by all staff to inform their work with individuals. Pupils do not see the purpose of reading and they do not choose to read. Pupils with limited reading and comprehension skills are not taught systematically enough to address gaps in their learning:
 - leaders should ensure that reading is promoted positively across the school
 - leaders should make sure that pupils who have limited reading and comprehension skills are taught systematically and frequently to help them address gaps in learning
 - teachers should extend pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Learning support assistants (LSAs) make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development in a range of activities. However, they are not always deployed as effectively as they could be to support pupils' learning and progress. Leaders should ensure LSAs are deployed to make the best use of their skills.
- Pupils are very positive about the school. They appreciate the opportunities they have to re-engage with education and succeed. They say they would like more opportunities to develop pupil voice and contribute their ideas.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	119853
DfE registration number	888/6026
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10112063
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	46
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Acorn Care and Education Limited
Chair	James Joyce
Acting Headteacher	Andy McGoldrick
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,314 to £51,300
Telephone number	01204 522 667
Website	http://waterloolodge.co.uk/
Email address	admin@waterloolodge.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–3 May 2018

Information about this school

- Waterloo Lodge School provides education for pupils aged 11 to 18 who have education, health and care plans for their social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Pupils are placed at the school by local authorities across the North West region.
- Pupils join the school at any time from the start of Year 7 onwards. They have usually attended a number of other schools that have not been able to meet their needs, before they start.
- The school uses four alternative providers: Cast North West, Creative Works Preston, Achieve Training in Bury and Red Box Training in Bolton.
- Since the last inspection, 10 staff have left and 10 staff have joined the school. The headteacher joined the school in April 2019 and the designated safeguarding lead started in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, governors and leaders for English, mathematics, PSHE and the alternative curriculum. The lead inspector spoke with the school's proprietor by telephone.
- We looked at reading, mathematics, creative arts and PSHE in depth. Inspection activity in these subjects included: evaluation of curriculum planning; visits to lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work; listening to pupils read; discussion with subject leaders, teachers and learning support assistants; and discussions with pupils about their learning.
- We looked at safeguarding procedures and records of safeguarding and behaviour. We spoke with staff and pupils to check their understanding of safeguarding procedures.
- In addition to the subject-focused activities, we looked at pupils' learning in the wider curriculum and in their personalised tuition.
- We looked at school policies and improvement planning.
- We spoke with pupils about school life and their views on teaching and behaviour. We took into account two free-text comments in Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers, and considered 26 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Shutt

Ofsted Inspector

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