

The Linnet Independent Learning Centre

107 Mount Pleasant Road, Castle Gresley, Derbyshire DE11 9JE

Inspection date

6 July 2022

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that pupils were provided with a coherent and aspirational curriculum. The curriculum did not enable pupils to build their learning progressively. Leaders had not prioritised reading. They had not made sure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were met effectively. Pupils at each key stage were not prepared well for their next stage of education.
- All these issues still remain. Leaders are still at the early stages of planning a well-sequenced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. They have not ensured that the curriculum identifies the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.
- Leaders have focused their attention on the mathematics and English curriculum. However, they have not made sure that they have coordinated the approach of those staff responsible for developing these plans. As a result, leaders have not ensured consistency in the quality of planning for mathematics and English.
- Leaders confirmed that planning for other subject areas is further behind the stage that has been reached in the planning for English and mathematics.
- The requirements remain unmet.

Paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the planned curriculum covered all of the areas of learning. They had not ensured that pupils had sufficient opportunities to acquire communication and numeracy skills. The provision for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education did not meet the pupils' needs.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum offer. They have ensured that pupils experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.

- All pupils now receive sufficient opportunities to acquire some communication and numeracy skills through the English and mathematics curriculums.
- The PSHE education provided now matches the needs of the pupils.
- The requirements are now met.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that curriculum plans identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn. They had not ensured that teaching builds on what pupils have learned previously. They had not made sure that pupils learn things in the right order, so that they know and remember more over time. Teachers were not given the guidance and training they needed to teach the pupils effectively.
- The new curriculum that leaders have introduced does not set out clearly what pupils need to learn and when. Teachers do not know exactly what they need to teach. The curriculum planning does not build on learning from the previous key stage. For example, key stage 3 plans for English contain requirements for pupils working in Year 3.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers have had the professional development training that was identified in the school's action plan. Some teachers do not know the best ways to teach the subjects they deliver. Their lessons are not supporting pupils' ability to build their knowledge over time. Pupils are not always secure in their understanding of what they have learned, as the learning is not suitably broken down for them to understand what they are expected to learn or do. Some older pupils cannot recall any prior learning from subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff are aware of the targets outlined in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. These targets have not been broken down into smaller steps so that they can be monitored and reviewed. Staff are unaware of what strategies, support and resources to use that will best meet pupils' needs.
- The requirements remain unmet.

Paragraphs 3, 3(g), 4

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not implemented a curriculum that allowed pupils to make strong progress towards developing important knowledge and skills. Because leaders had not identified clear curriculum outcomes, it was not possible for teachers to assess progress towards these.
- The issues around the assessment of progress remain. Leaders have not put in place a suitable assessment framework. The assessments they have chosen to use do not match the curriculum pupils are learning. The tests that pupils take do not identify what they know or where there may be gaps in their knowledge. Teachers are still unable to assess accurately the progress of pupils towards identified curriculum outcomes.
- The requirements of these standards remain unmet.
- The school does not meet all the requirements of the independent school standards that were checked in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- The standard relating to the school's safeguarding arrangements was judged to be met at the previous inspection.
- The current arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils at the school are not effective.
- Leaders have not followed safer recruitment practices, as set out in the latest national guidance. They have not obtained and verified up-to-date references from previous employers. They have not completed all the required checks for all members of staff prior to their employment.
- Safeguarding records do not detail the actions leaders have taken in response to concerns about pupils' welfare. It is not clear whether leaders have acted appropriately in response to safeguarding concerns. Not all safeguarding records are complete. They do not contain all relevant information about known safeguarding concerns.
- Leaders do not check on pupils who are missing education. Leaders have not performed welfare checks for some pupils who have not attended the school for considerable periods of time. When welfare calls are made and not answered, leaders do not follow these up with other actions, or involve other appropriate agencies.
- The standard is unmet.

Paragraphs 3, 3(h), 9, 9(b)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that staff implemented the behaviour policy effectively. Leaders did not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new points system to encourage positive behaviour from pupils. However, their expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are not as positive as they should be. Pupils too easily disengage from learning and work to their own agenda. Pupils do not learn as well as they should. During the inspection, for example, several pupils wandered out of classrooms during lessons. Staff followed them with little expectation that they should return to their learning.
- The requirements of these standards remain unmet.

Paragraph 14

- The standard relating to supervision was judged to be met at the previous inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that the levels of supervision are appropriate.

Paragraph 15

- The standard relating to attendance and admission registers was judged to be met at the previous inspection.
- Currently, leaders do not maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Registers contain inaccurate codes. Leaders code pupils' absence as authorised when it should be unauthorised. When

leaders send pupils home to study following behavioural incidents, they record these pupils as being authorised absent when they should be classed as excluded.

- The standard related to attendance and admission registers is unmet.

Paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The standard relating to risk assessment was judged to be met at the previous inspection.
- Risk assessments do not contain necessary detail in relation to the identified risks and the actions to mitigate them. Leaders do not review risk assessments following serious incidents. There is no evidence that leaders update individual pupil risk assessments after incidents of physical restraint.
- The standard is unmet.
- The school does not meet the requirements of the independent school standards that were checked in this part.

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

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4)

- The standards related to the school's recruitment procedures and the recording of these checks on the school's single central record were judged to be met at the previous inspection.
- The recruitment process for new staff is not robust enough. Leaders are not clear about what pre-employment checks are required. Leaders have not consistently checked on the previous employment of staff they employ. There was no evidence that medical fitness checks for new staff had been completed.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the single central record contains all the required information about pre-employment checks.
- The school does not meet all the requirements of the independent school standards that were checked in this part.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 11, 25

- At the previous inspection, leaders had maintained the school premises and facilities to an appropriate standard to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. Leaders undertook appropriate health and safety checks.
- Leaders continue to maintain the premises and facilities to an appropriate standard.
- The school meets the requirement of the independent school standards that were checked in this part.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy was uploaded to the school's website during the previous inspection.
- The latest version of the safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.
- The school meets the requirements of the independent school standards that were checked in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- At the previous inspection, it was found that the proprietor had not ensured that the school consistently met the independent school standards.
- The proprietor has not acted effectively to address all the standards that were not met at the previous inspection. The majority of previously unmet standards remain unmet.
- The proprietor has failed to maintain some standards that were judged to be met at the previous inspection. Safeguarding arrangements are not effective. Leaders are not aware of the situation of some of the most vulnerable pupils who have poor attendance. They do not follow safer recruitment practices. The quality of safeguarding records is poor.
- Leaders do not actively promote the well-being of pupils. They do not adequately monitor the well-being of vulnerable pupils. They do not update individual pupil risk assessments after incidents. Staff do not have the information they need to help pupils make progress towards their EHC plan targets. As a result, some pupils do not get the support they need to make the most of their learning.
- The school does not meet all the requirements of the independent school standards that were checked in this part.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	131327
DfE registration number	830/6033
Inspection number	10243043

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Lewis Charlton Ltd
Chair	Zaheer Esat
Headteacher	Nicky Felthouse
Annual fees (day pupils)	£69,000 to £72,450
Telephone number	01283 213989
Website	www.thelinnetindependentlearningcentre.co.uk
Email address	nfelthouse@linnet.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	23 to 25 November 2021

Information about this school

- The Linnet Independent Learning Centre is an independent day special school for boys aged three to 16 years. There are currently 20 pupils on roll, aged between seven and 16.
- The school is part of Lewis Charlton Ltd, which is the proprietor. The company has one director. It has an advisory board that acts as a governing body with delegated responsibilities. There are five governors.
- The school operates across three sites: The Nest and Treetops at Castle Gresley, Derbyshire DE11 9JE, and The Willows, Ashby-de-la-Zouch LE65 1HU.

- The Department for Education wrote to the school in May 2022 stating that the leaders' action plan had been assessed by Ofsted as unsatisfactory. The decision made was to reject the action plan on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education.
- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2021. The executive headteacher has been in post since November 2018. Previously, the school had seen several changes to the senior leadership.
- Pupils typically have significant behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. Pupils travel to the school from several local authorities. A few pupils are in the care of their placing local authorities.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 23 to 25 November 2021. Inspectors found multiple failings against the independent school standards at the time of this inspection.

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 inspection. The registration authority for independent schools also commissioned inspectors to consider the independent school standards that were related to complaints they had received about the school.
- The inspection took place with no notice. This was in line with the commission from the registration authority, the Department for Education. The inspection was the school's first monitoring inspection.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and senior staff. The lead inspector spoke to the proprietor on the telephone. Inspectors spoke with a number of other staff. The executive headteacher attended the final feedback meeting.
- The inspectors spoke to some pupils.
- The lead inspector visited some lessons in the Treetops building.
- The inspectors visited all three sites. They checked the premises in relation to the independent school standards.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents relating to the school's provision, including the revised action plan, safeguarding records and pupils' risk assessments.
- The inspectors checked a sample of pupils' EHC plans.
- The inspectors checked the school's single central record and recruitment procedures.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Mosley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) 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;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

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

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person–

- 18(2)(c)(ii) the person's medical fitness;
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–
 - 21(3)(a)(i) S's identity was checked;
 - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
 - 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
 - 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
- 21(4) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of staff in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007, whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (3) was made and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph 2(1)(a), the matters are–

- 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
- 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
- 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
- 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school’s aim and ethos; and
- 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act;

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