

Inspection of TLG Reading

Empress Road, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 4XR

Inspection dates:

29 November to 1 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and proprietors are driven by their moral purpose and ambition to make a positive difference to the lives of pupils. Their approach is rooted in the school's Christian ethos. Many pupils join the school at a time of crisis in their lives. Strong pastoral care and a nurturing environment enable pupils to reconnect with education. Staff forge warm, respectful relationships with pupils. They deal effectively with any bullying, following the school's restorative principles.

Since joining the school, many pupils' attendance has shown remarkable improvement. Some now rarely miss a day in school. Over time, they develop a renewed sense of hope and success. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They look forward to their end of term visits, such as their recent visit to the trampoline park. Most pupils behave well and try hard to regulate their behaviour when they become anxious.

While pupils benefit from a broad curriculum, provision for reading is not yet consistently effective. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read well enough. This also limits their ability to spell and write accurately in English and in other subjects. Some specific aspects of pupils' learning needs are also not yet addressed sufficiently well.

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

In recent years there have been extended periods when the school has not been fully staffed. This means that the headteacher has been juggling multiple roles. This has limited her capacity to address some strategic responsibilities and implement planned improvements. Despite these challenges, the headteacher and staff have provided continuity of care and education for pupils at the school.

Until the inspection, some potential risks in the school's premises had gone unchecked. While the proprietor took swift action to address these during the inspection, this illustrates weaknesses in the proprietor's oversight of the school. Consequently, the proprietor has not ensured that all the independent standards are met consistently. The proprietor has recently taken steps to increase leadership capacity at the school through the appointment of an executive head of centre. There is now a planned programme of quality assurance and compliance visits to strengthen oversight and accountability.

Leaders have not ensured that enough emphasis is given to some specific aspects of pupils' learning needs. Some of the long-term learning outcomes from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are not translated into short-term curriculum goals. Although reading takes place regularly on the timetable, there is not yet a consistent approach to this subject. Gaps in pupils' reading knowledge are not addressed well enough. As a result, some pupils do not acquire effective

strategies to enable them to work out unknown words. This in turn means that some continue to struggle with spelling and writing.

However, in subjects such as science and mathematics the curriculum is coherently planned. Staff have adapted the TLG schemes of work to ensure that content is manageable. They have prioritised the key content that pupils need to learn and sequenced this logically. The online assessments in mathematics enable staff to identify and address specific gaps in pupils' knowledge. In these aspects of the curriculum, pupils are building their knowledge securely.

Leaders have an unwavering commitment to addressing the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of pupils. They have ensured that the curriculum and teaching approaches meet these aspects of pupils' needs well. There is a strong focus on pupils' personal development, including life skills, such as preparing food and becoming independent. Pupils benefit from a well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum. They are taught about how to keep safe and learn how to identify and manage risk.

The headteacher and staff are highly attuned to pupils' anxieties. They effectively and calmly de-escalate moments when pupils are struggling to manage their emotions. Staff's day-to-day interactions with pupils focus on helping them to overcome barriers resulting from their SEMH needs. Pupil voice and choice help pupils to feel a sense of ownership over their learning. Adults use every opportunity to recognise and praise pupils' achievements. Pupils are motivated by the school's reward points for their behaviour and work.

Values such as respect and tolerance are at the heart of the school's ethos. Pupils learn about social justice and the meaning and impact of discrimination. They understand that everyone should be treated equally and fairly. Equality is strongly promoted and the headteacher has ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from wider educational experiences. Most pupils attend the weekly youth group which is run by staff from the partner church. This provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to socialise, develop friendships and learn new skills. During the inspection, pupils were excited to receive their advent calendars and are looking forward to the school's Christmas festivities. They receive appropriate careers guidance and are supported through their individual pathways to their next stage of education. Some pupils return to mainstream education. Others pursue courses at a local college.

The headteacher and staff work as a dedicated close-knit team and feel a great sense of fulfilment from their work. They do all they can to engage parents and form a 'team around the family'. Parents have nothing but praise for staff's support and work with their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has made pupils' well-being and safety her top priority. She has a very strong knowledge of all pupils. This enables her to be highly alert and responsive to anything that may be a problem. The headteacher knows when concerns need to be referred to the local authority and does so without delay. She ensures that pupils and their families receive timely support. The school offers a range of early help, including through the local authority's family support team. Support for families is also provided from the church family support workers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The proprietor has not ensured that checks on some aspects of the premises are sufficiently robust, or that all health and safety measures are followed consistently. As a result, some potential risks and maintenance issues have been overlooked and not addressed in a timely manner. The proprietor needs to take swift action to ensure that the school's health and safety procedures are followed consistently well. They need to take immediate action to ensure that the temperature of the hot water does not pose a potential scalding risk.
- The proprietor has not kept a strong enough oversight of the school, including the school's compliance with the independent school standards. Consequently, the proprietor was unaware of some unmet standards until this was identified during the inspection. The proprietor needs to strengthen their oversight of the school and ensure that they implement systems to enable them to check all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders have not yet implemented a consistent approach to the teaching of reading for pupils who are not yet fluent, competent readers. This means that some pupils are not developing their reading knowledge well enough. Leaders need to implement their plans to put in place a coherent reading programme that addresses specific gaps in pupils' knowledge, including phonics.
- Leaders have not ensured that all aspects of pupils' specific learning needs are given sufficient focus. Currently, there is not a close enough check on how well pupils are progressing towards some learning outcomes in their EHC plans. As a result, some specific aspects of pupils' learning needs are not being met well enough. The headteacher needs to fine tune the curriculum and the school's review processes to ensure that all aspects of pupils' learning needs are fully met.
- The school is not fully staffed and there has been a long-term teaching vacancy. As a result, the headteacher has been holding multiple responsibilities. This has limited her capacity to fulfil all her strategic responsibilities. The proprietor needs to take action to strengthen capacity so that the headteacher is able to fulfil her strategic responsibilities effectively, including implementing planned improvements to reading.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

School details

Unique reference number	136706
DfE registration number	869/6201
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10243540
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Proprietor	Transforming Lives for Good (TLG)
Chair	Andrew Burton
Headteacher	Rachel Owen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,982
Telephone number	01189 432978
Website	www.tlgreading.org.uk
Email address	rachel.owen@tlg.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 July 2018

Information about this school

- TLG Reading provides alternative provision for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an EHC plan and most have SEMH needs.
- Pupils are referred from local schools and from the local authority of Reading.
- The school has a Christian ethos and is run by a national charity, Transforming Lives for Good (TLG). The school has a partnership with the Gate Community Church. Staff from the church, including the youth worker, volunteer regularly in the school.
- The school is open to pupils for four days a week. Some pupils are jointly registered with a mainstream school.
- In recent years the school has experienced lengthy periods when it has not been fully staffed. There is currently a long-term vacancy for a teacher, which the proprietor has been unable to fill. There are currently two members of staff at the school, including the headteacher.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The TLG board of trustees has delegated some responsibilities to a local proprietor board. This board includes members of the proprietor body, the executive head of centre and the headteacher. The chair of the board of trustees acts as the chair of the proprietor body.
- The school is led by a headteacher and an executive head of centre who was appointed to the school in September.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, talking with pupils, and meetings with staff and leaders.
- Telephone discussions were held with a representative of the local authority of Reading and a senior leader from a referring school.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding leader (headteacher). She reviewed the school's record of checks on adults and considered a wide range of safeguarding documents. The inspector also discussed safeguarding with staff and pupils.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and the executive head of centre. She also met the chair of the local proprietor board.
- The inspector held telephone discussions with two parents and took account of parents' free-text comments and responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. She also talked to staff and pupils to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 28(1)(d) the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users.

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.

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