

Inspection of Lawrence House School

8 Huyton Church Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 5SJ

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 February 2023

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	Good
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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?

When pupils first start at Lawrence House School, they have had difficult experiences in their lives. Pupils have emotional and behavioural needs. Usually, they have also missed a good deal of learning. Once pupils have joined the school, leaders help them to make improvements. Pupils said that they enjoy school and that they feel safe. Staff look after pupils effectively.

Leaders and other staff expect pupils to behave well. Some pupils do not find this easy at times. Staff are skilled at managing incidents of misbehaviour and encouraging pupils to focus on their learning again. Leaders and teachers also manage bullying well. Pupils know that staff do not tolerate bullying behaviour.

Pupils understand that leaders expect them to work as hard as they can to be as successful as they can. Most pupils improve their attitudes to learning with the help of their teachers. This enables pupils to gain the knowledge and skills that they need for the next steps to education, training or employment.

Pupils receive many opportunities to take part in activities that go beyond the formal curriculum. For instance, they enjoy visits to museums or places of worship. They also develop a sense of responsibility by creating and presenting assemblies in school about important themes, such as mental health.

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

The curriculum which leaders have designed is broad and ambitious and meets the needs of pupils well. It reflects the requirements of the independent school standards ('the standards'). Across most of the curriculum, leaders have effectively organised what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. In a small number of subjects, however, leaders have not made sure that they have arranged the knowledge that pupils need in logical and manageable steps. As a result, pupils do not develop as secure an understanding of these subjects as possible.

Leaders organise training to strengthen and develop teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers who do not have specialist knowledge of a subject receive help from leaders and other staff who have the relevant expertise. As a result, typically, teachers have strong subject knowledge. This helps teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively and enables them to provide pupils with clear explanations of their learning.

Leaders identify the gaps in pupils' learning effectively when they first arrive at the school. These gaps are usually substantial and have arisen because of pupils' needs. Teachers adapt their teaching well to address pupils' missing knowledge and skills. Teachers have a range of effective approaches to assess how well pupils know and remember what they have learned. Teachers use a combination of formal written tests and frequent checks that pupils are keeping up with the learning during

lessons. For the most part, pupils remember their learning well. Leaders ensure that most pupils gain qualifications which help them to be ready for their next steps.

Leaders make reading a priority in the school. They encourage a love of reading by, for example, providing pupils with regular access to the school library, which contains a good range of books. When pupils first start at the school, leaders assess how well pupils can read and ensure that their teaching supports the development of pupils' reading. In most cases, pupils become fluent and accurate readers.

In recent times, leaders have recognised that some pupils are at the early stages of reading and need to learn phonics. Leaders have introduced a well-organised phonics programme to support these pupils. However, some teachers have not received enough training in the teaching of phonics. There is a lack of consistency in the way that they teach pupils the sounds that letters make. Consequently, some pupils do not build up the knowledge that they need strongly enough to become fluent, accurate and confident readers.

When pupils first arrive at the school, their behaviour is influenced by their specific needs and traumatic experiences. Leaders have supportive strategies which enable staff to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Most pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. This means there are few disruptions to pupils' learning in lessons. Pupils also improve their attendance during their time at the school.

Leaders have effective systems to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff receive useful training to help them to identify the needs of these pupils. There is a wide range of internal and external support available to help pupils, such as an in-house clinical psychologist. This support helps most pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Well-being and health are an important focus of leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development. There is well-planned teaching of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which covers a range of relevant topics. Pupils also have some opportunities to take part in clubs to develop their interests and talents, although the range is not as wide as it could be. There is also helpful careers advice, which enables leaders to steer pupils down paths that match their interests and strengths.

Staff who spoke with inspectors were highly positive about the support that leaders provide to help them to manage their welfare and workload. They explained that leaders are approachable and supportive.

The proprietor body has ensured that all the standards are met. The chair of the proprietor body and those responsible for governance know the school well. They understand their statutory duties and make thorough checks on the effectiveness of the work of school leaders. Leaders have made sure that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 by having a suitable action plan in place to support pupils with disabilities who may attend the school.

Leaders have a policy and a scheme of work in place for relationships and sex education, which follow the government's guidance. The scheme of work covers important themes, including healthy relationships and consent.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a detailed and up-to-date safeguarding policy in place. This is published on the school's website.

There are robust procedures for reporting and recording any safeguarding concerns about pupils. Leaders have trained staff well in how to identify possible signs of abuse and report concerns promptly. Leaders respond swiftly to provide pupils and their families with the help that they need. Leaders make use of external support, such as local children's social care services, when required.

Leaders provide pupils with important knowledge about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils find out about how to maintain healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not been clear enough about the knowledge that pupils need to learn or how that knowledge is broken down into logical and manageable steps. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge securely enough in these subjects. Leaders should make sure that they identify precisely what pupils need to learn and organise the order in which pupils will learn this knowledge in all subjects.
- Some teachers do not teach the sounds that letters make in a consistent way to pupils who are in the early stages of reading. As a result, these pupils do not build up the knowledge of phonics that they need to become fluent and accurate readers. Leaders should ensure that they provide teachers with suitable training to enable them to deliver the school's phonics programme well so that these pupils develop fluency and accuracy in their 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	136752
DfE registration number	340/6001
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10254660
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	13
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Quality Protects Children Ltd
Chair	Anthony Nolan
Headteacher	Michael Melbourne
Annual fees (day pupils)	£62,400
Telephone number	0151 949 5690
Website	www.qpconline.co.uk/education
Email address	lawrencehouseschool@qpconline.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 to 27 September 2018

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- The school's previous standard inspection was 25 to 27 September 2018.
- The school caters for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs include behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorder.
- Leaders make use of one unregistered alternative provision.
- In addition to Lawrence House School, 8 Huyton Church Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 5SJ, the school operates from the following sites: Bluebell Cottage, Cronton Road, Liverpool L35 1QU; Derby Cottage, 1 Park Road, Prescot, Liverpool L34 3LN; Nzuri House, 15 Sandringham Drive, Liverpool L17 4JN; and Wayside, 144 Rupert Road, Huyton, Liverpool L36 9TH.
- There are currently very few pupils at the school who are aged over 16. These pupils are not taught separately from other pupils.
- The proprietor is Quality Protects Children Ltd. However, on the government's website, 'Get information about schools', the proprietor is recorded as Anthony Nolan. Anthony Nolan is the chair of the proprietor body. Leaders are in communication with the Department for Education to amend this information.

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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of the proprietor body, the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector spoke with a social worker from one of several local authorities that place pupils at the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, including reading, science and PSHE education. In each subject, they met with the subject leader and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to members of staff. He also examined the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the school's safeguarding policy, along with other policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and their education. They talked with staff and pupils about safeguarding, pupils' personal development and pupils'

behaviour and attitudes. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.

- The lead inspector carried out a tour of the premises to check for compliance against the relevant independent school standards.
- Inspectors analysed responses to Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey or staff survey.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adam Sproston

His Majesty's Inspector

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