

Inspection of Lewis Charlton Learning Centre

9a & 10a Waterloo House, North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1HS

Inspection dates:

14 to 16 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. Most enjoy attending. They benefit from the high numbers of staff who support them. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils appreciate the attention they receive from staff. Pupils generally get on well with each other.

The school does not understand well enough the full scope of the needs of its pupils, all of whom are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff do not consistently take pupils' additional needs into account when planning and delivering the curriculum. Some pupils do not get the support they need.

Pupils do not receive an ambitious and well-planned curriculum. Many aspects of the school's curriculum are at an early stage of development. Many pupils do not learn as well as they should.

The school does not have a well-thought-through personal development programme. Not all pupils have opportunities to gain an understanding of different religions and cultures. Some pupils do not have opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Some older pupils benefit from suitable careers education and experiences that help prepare them for their next steps.

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

The school has not thought carefully enough about how best to teach pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are not accurately assessed when they first join the school. This limits how well the curriculum can meet pupils' needs and help them to achieve well.

Because the school does not understand the needs of its pupils well enough, targets in pupils' individual education plans lack the necessary accuracy and precision. This leads to a lack of clarity about what the school expects pupils to learn and how. Expectations of learning, consequently, are too low. Pupils do not learn as well as they could and do not make appropriate progress.

The curriculum is limited in its ambition. Many subject curriculums are poorly planned. These curriculums do not clearly identify what leaders want pupils to learn and when. There has been little thought given to how pupils build learning over time. There is a very disjointed approach to teaching the curriculum since the 'lower school' and 'upper school' function separately. For example, some of the secure planning and teaching seen in the lower school are not built on for older pupils in the upper school. This can lead to subject curriculums being fragmented, and pupils' learning over time, across the different years, not being planned for sufficiently well. In turn, this limits pupils' achievement.

Leaders do not have an effective way of assessing what pupils know and can do when they start at the school. Consequently, the school has a limited understanding of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and what they need to learn. Staff do not consistently check pupils' understanding. Some staff do not adapt their teaching when pupils find work too easy or too difficult. Some pupils are left confused, and others disengage from their learning. Staff do not ensure that pupils are secure in their understanding before moving on to new learning. Pupils struggle to recall what they have been taught and what they have learned.

The school has recently introduced a phonics programme for pupils who are at the early stages of learning how to read. This is beginning to improve these pupils' reading knowledge and skills. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way in which this programme is taught. The books that pupils read do not consistently match the sounds that they know. These weaknesses limit pupils' ability to become accurate and fluent readers as quickly as they could.

Sixth-form students generally access the same curriculum as the older pupils in the main school, which is of a poor quality. Owing to this, sixth-form students do not achieve as well as they should. However, some provision is better suited to students' needs. This is particularly the case for those students who complete some of their studies at a local college and at alternative provision. Some students benefit from appropriate work-experience placements. These opportunities, along with life skills lessons, help students to develop their social skills and explore a range of career choices.

The behaviour of some pupils improves during their time at the school. The number of serious incidents that require physical intervention has reduced slightly over time. Pupils enjoy earning reward points for working hard and meeting their behaviour targets. Staff say that this system has helped to improve the behaviour of some pupils. However, the school does not have a clear oversight of behaviour, including whether pupils' behaviour improves over time or not. The school does not know whether pupils are communicating their frustration about unmet needs through their behaviour. The school is unaware of whether the behaviour policy, including the use of sanctions, is having a particularly negative impact on certain pupils with specific needs.

The school does not have an oversight of attendance. There has been no analysis of absence to inform strategic planning to improve attendance. However, staff check on the welfare of absent pupils.

Some aspects of the school's personal development provision are well planned. Pupils benefit from caring pastoral support. Older pupils benefit from careers education and guidance, which helps them to explore a range of next steps. Younger pupils learn to respect people who have views, beliefs and opinions that are different from their own. However, older pupils do not have the same opportunities. The school has not clearly identified the precise knowledge that all pupils need to learn through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. There is not a consistent approach to the delivery of PSHE education across the

whole school. Work to develop pupils' character is less well developed. There are few opportunities for pupils to develop talents and interests. Not all pupils benefit from well-planned activities and experiences that prepare them for their next steps.

The proprietor has not made sure that the school meets the independent school standards (the standards). Leaders, including the proprietor, have an inaccurate view of the school. They have focused on improving some aspects of pupils' emotional and behavioural needs, but do not have a clear understanding of the complex needs of many of the pupils. Leaders have not improved the quality of education; many of the curriculum weaknesses found at the previous standard inspection remain. The school's capacity to improve this aspect of the school's provision is weak. The proprietor has, however, made improvements in safeguarding arrangements to keep pupils safe.

The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance and is available on its website. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school has not thought carefully enough about how best to teach pupils with SEND. Pupils' additional needs are not accurately assessed or provided for. The targets set for pupils in their individual education plans are not precise and accurate. There are no clear success criteria for any support that pupils receive to ensure that the interventions are successful. As a result, pupils with SEND do not achieve well. The school should ensure that staff have the required information about pupils' additional needs to enable them to teach these pupils effectively so that they can achieve as well as they should.
- The curriculum has limited ambition. Many subject curriculums do not sequence learning well and are not progressive. This includes the provision that sixth-form students receive on the school site. Insufficient thought has been given to how pupils' learning will build as they progress through the school. As a result, many pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school needs to ensure that there is an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum in place that enables pupils to achieve well and that prepares them for their next steps in learning.
- The school does not have an effective system to assess pupils' learning. Leaders have not established an approach that accurately assesses what pupils know when they first start at the school. There is no consistent way of checking pupils' learning before moving on to new learning. As a result, pupils do not build learning over time. The school should ensure that all staff know how to assess

pupils' learning and determine misconceptions and gaps in learning, so that they can plan and teach the appropriate next steps in pupils' learning.

- There is no strategic oversight of attendance and behaviour. As a result, there are no plans in place to improve these areas. The lack of analysis of behaviour means that the school is unaware of whether pupils with specific needs are adversely impacted by sanctions for any inappropriate behaviour. The school must ensure that there is sufficient oversight of both behaviour and attendance in order to inform strategic plans to bring about improvement in both.
- The precise knowledge that the school intends pupils to acquire across the school from the PSHE education curriculum is not clear. There are few opportunities for pupils to develop talents and interests, and for older pupils to learn about different beliefs and cultures. Consequently, pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. The school should ensure that the provision for pupils' personal development enables pupils to prepare fully for life in modern Britain.
- The proprietor has not ensured that the school meets all the standards. The proprietor should ensure that leaders have the necessary insight to enable them to make sure that the school consistently meets the standards.

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	134438
DfE registration number	855/6020
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10286409
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Lewis Charlton Ltd
Chair	Zaheer Esat
Headteacher	Malcolm Kerridge
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,350 to £107,850
Telephone number	01530 560775
Website	www.lewischarltonschool.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@lewischarltonschool.org
Date of previous inspection	22 to 25 March 2022

Information about this school

- Lewis Charlton Learning Centre is an independent special school. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. A significant number of pupils have also been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autism. Many pupils have communication and interaction needs, as detailed in their EHC plans.
- On 23 June 2023, the proprietor of Lewis Charlton Learning Centre informed the Department for Education (DfE) that the school had merged with The Linnet Independent Learning Centre, a school also owned by the proprietor. The Linnet Independent Learning Centre closed on 29 August 2023. At the time of its closing, the Linnet Independent Learning Centre was judged to not be meeting the standards related to: the quality of education; pupils' welfare, health and safety; staff recruitment; the provision of information; and leadership and management.
- The school is located across five sites. Two sites, Abney Hastings and Lewis Charlton Village, are located on South Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch LE65 1BR. The Haven, Space City and the Lower School sites are located on North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1HU.
- During the inspection, the school applied to the DfE to deregister two other sites. These were: Lewis Charlton College, located on Moira Road, Donisthorpe DE12 7QE, and The Nest and Treetops, 107 Mount Pleasant Road, Castle Gresley, Derbyshire DE11 9JE.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision and one further education college, where some pupils receive part of their education.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place from 22 to 25 March 2022.
- An emergency inspection of the school took place on 6 July 2022.
- A progress monitoring inspection of the school took place on 23 February 2023.

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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and the head of school. Inspectors met with leaders who have responsibility for leading the school's different sites. The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietorial body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, reading, mathematics, history and PSHE education. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered curriculum plans in religious education and social communication curriculums and visited lessons.
- Inspectors also reviewed individual pupils' EHC plans and associated education and learning plans. They scrutinised individual pupil risk assessments and pupils' behaviour support plans.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school development plan.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took note of parents' and carers' responses on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors met with pupils to discuss different aspects of the school's provision.
- Inspectors toured the premises and reviewed the school's facilities.

The school's progress in meeting previously failed standards

During the inspection, we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that The Linnet Independent Learning Centre was judged to have failed at its previous monitoring inspection, which took place on 21 March 2023. The failed standards that were the focus of this inspection were those that related to the now-closed school, The Linnet Independent Learning Centre, at the time of its last monitoring inspection. The findings of this inspection relate to the newly merged school, Lewis Charlton Learning Centre.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school continues not to meet the previously failed standards.**
- At the previous monitoring inspection of The Linnet Independent Learning Centre, inspectors found that staff had not been trained to deliver the new schemes of work, including the phonics programme. The work pupils produced was not always of a high enough standard, nor at the appropriate level. Pupils could not recall what they had learned.
- Since the school merged with Lewis Charlton Learning Centre, leaders have started to address some of these issues, but many still remain. Staff still have not

had the training they need to create and deliver well-structured subject curriculums. Some staff in the lower school have had training to deliver phonics, but the programme is in the very early stages of implementation. There are inconsistencies in the way the programme is delivered. There is little evidence of well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods. Pupils are still given work that does not take into consideration their prior learning. Pupils struggle to recall what they have learned. The previously unmet requirements for these standards remain unmet.

- At the previous monitoring inspection, pupils had a very weak understanding related to opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. Inspectors found that resources were of a poor quality. Too many pupils were not interested in their learning. The school did not have an effective assessment system for pupils in key stages 3 and 4 that informed parents about their children's learning.
- Since the two schools merged, leaders have improved the personal development programme. Pupils are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. The resources that teachers use are appropriate. Fewer pupils are disengaged with learning. The school has established an appropriate assessment framework, and this is communicated to parents. The previously unmet requirements of these standards are now met.
- At the previous monitoring inspection, the proprietor had not assured itself as to the suitability of new staff because it had not followed up on references. Leaders did not consistently record actions they had taken in response to concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders did not refer to statutory guidance when dealing with serious safeguarding concerns.
- The proprietor has now ensured that all recruitment checks are undertaken in a timely manner. Leaders' responses to safeguarding concerns are timely and appropriate. They follow the necessary guidance in relation to keeping pupils safe. Leaders maintain accurate records of their actions to resolve concerns about pupils' welfare. The previously unmet standards in relation to the recruitment of staff and safeguarding are now met.
- At the previous monitoring inspection, the inspectors found that off-site risk assessments lacked the necessary detail to enable staff to identify potential risks and to mitigate these.
- The proprietor has revised the school's health and safety processes and introduced more rigorous checks on risk assessments. Risk assessments now include specific details related to potential hazards and how to mitigate risks. The previously unmet standard in relation to risk assessment is now met.
- At the previous monitoring inspection, the inspectors found that the proprietor and leaders had not demonstrated good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles, so that all the standards were securely and consistently met.
- The proprietor and leaders have not ensured that the known weaknesses in the quality of education have been sufficiently addressed. Some standards previously judged to be not met continue to be unmet. Leaders do not demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that the school consistently meets all

the standards. The standard in relation to leadership and management remains unmet.

Information about the progress monitoring inspection

- The DfE commissioned a progress monitoring inspection to take place at the same time as the standard inspection. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the requirements of the standards that were judged to be unmet at the progress monitoring inspection of The Linnet Independent Learning Centre that took place on 21 March 2023. These unmet standards related to: the quality of education provided; the welfare, health and safety of pupils; and leadership and management.
- The DfE required the school to submit an action plan. Ofsted evaluated this plan on 24 July 2023 and deemed it to be not acceptable.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor and school leaders.
- The lead inspector considered documentation related to: the quality of education; safeguarding; the recruitment of staff; and risk assessment.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Vic Wilkinson	His Majesty's Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

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.
- 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.
- 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(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(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.

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
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 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(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range.
- 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

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

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