

Lakeside School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	John Coleman HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Lakeside School is an independent co-educational day special school that was opened in January 2001. It caters for pupils with complex learning and communication difficulties, with associated challenging behaviours, in the age range from five to 13 years. The school is located in a semi-rural environment on the outskirts of Huyton near Liverpool. Accommodation is provided in a converted farmhouse for up to 26 pupils. There are currently 20 pupils on roll all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. Funding is provided by the placing local authorities from which each pupil is referred and the school currently provides for pupils from nine different local authorities. Lakeside school is part of the Witherslack group of schools nationwide which provides education and care for children and young people with complex needs. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2007. In 2010 the school was awarded Fairtrade school status and they have achieved the silver Eco award.

The school applied to the Department for Education for a material change to the types of special educational needs provision for which it is registered. The school requested the deletion of registration for pupils with severe learning difficulties. It also requested the addition of registration for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, speech language and communication difficulties, behaviour, emotional and social difficulty and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders. This was considered as part of the inspection and the judgement is included in the overall evaluation.

The school aims to:

'provide a family orientated, therapeutic and nurturing environment, where children grow in confidence and self esteem, in order to make academic progress. To promote children's resilience, and provide opportunities which allow them to develop into healthy, independent and responsible members of society.'

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Evaluation of the school

Lakeside school provides an outstanding overall quality of education and meets its aims very well. An excellent curriculum and outstanding teaching and assessment ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development and their academic learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for their welfare, health and safety are also outstanding. The school's leaders have successfully addressed all the issues identified at the last inspection including the one unmet regulation. All the regulations for continued registration as an independent school are met. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all the requirements. The request for a material change to the school's registration is approved.

Quality of education

The curriculum and other activities are outstanding and meet the range of needs and interests of pupils. The curriculum is modified to take full account of rigorous and detailed assessments of pupils' personal, behavioural and academic needs. This ensures it is very well matched to pupils' specific requirements and school leaders are constantly seeking ways to improve and refine it. The school provides much of the National Curriculum. There is a phonics programme used to accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and spelling. Several schemes of work are used to supplement and enhance national schemes such as the national literacy and numeracy frameworks. There are detailed curriculum policies for every subject. These outline the expectations for planning, the learning environment and for teaching and learning. Curriculum plans are extensive and set out the work to be covered term by term, week by week and day by day. Lesson plans include the activities which pupils will engage in and the learning objectives which are expected as a result, though not all plans make clear links between the two.

On admission to the school, each pupil completes a range of rigorous assessments and these are used well so that individual intervention programmes are devised to support pupils' learning in the key skills of language and communication. The speech and language therapists deliver these programmes which are carefully tailored for pupils. Effective liaison with teachers ensures that the impact of this is maximised in the core curriculum taking place in the classroom.

The curriculum is wonderfully enriched by a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. There is a family feel to the activities taking place before school and at lunchtime. All staff and pupils participate. On arrival each morning, pupils choose from a healthy selection of breakfast items before settling down to a game of chess, which is enormously popular. Many pupils join in with the gardening activities, growing their own vegetables and practising eco-friendly compost collection. Pupils have opportunities for trips to the theatre, museums, farms, places of worship, parks and

involvement in supporting charitable events. Pupils engage in earning Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) Awards and British Gymnastics Proficiency Awards.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding and meet the full range of pupils' needs. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was all at least good with significant outstanding features in assessment, guidance and support for pupils. The school's record of monitoring teaching shows all observations are judged as good or outstanding. Teaching is characterised by the staff's excellent use of behaviour management strategies including lots of praise and their consistently high expectations of pupils' responses and engagement. As a result, pupils behave very well and there is little interruption to learning. A wide range of teaching methods are used which emphasise practical experiences for pupils. Many visual aids and sensory materials make learning interesting. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations and use good questioning techniques. There is ongoing assessment and reinforcement of learning. The effective deployment of teaching assistants, who are skilled in guiding and supporting pupils, means that pupils receive regular close attention to their specific learning needs.

School leaders and managers have improved their development planning since the last inspection and this is especially so for middle leaders responsible for monitoring the subjects of the curriculum. Plans are in place to improve the curriculum and to increase the progress which pupils make. However, there is insufficient focus in the plans on the importance of improving the quality of teaching. The plans do not sharply identify the essential links between improving the school's provision and improving the progress made by pupils.

The wide range of assessments, which are rigorously recorded, are a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupil progress is assessed on a bi-annual basis in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal and social development using a nationally recognised system. Where appropriate, pupils undertake Key Stage 2 national tests. All pupils are assessed by the speech and language therapist and occupational therapist on at least an annual basis. Reading and numerical assessments are also used on an annual basis to assess pupils' progress. For pupils who are participating in the intensive phonics programme, there is frequent assessment of their progress, to ensure pupils are grouped according to their ability. Leaders in the school are developing their analysis of the outcomes of this impressive range of assessments. They have an accurate view of the progress being made by individual pupils and this information is used well to inform the next steps in pupils' learning. As yet, they do not have an in-depth evaluation of the progress of groups of pupils or the trends in school performance over time.

Inspection and school analysis of the data held about pupils' progress in language, mathematics and organisational skills show pupils make outstanding progress. Some past pupils have achieved the higher Level 5 in the Key Stage 2 national tests. One previous pupil recently succeeded in his application to a grammar school. The

outcomes of the school's annual assessments clearly show all pupils making good and outstanding gains in their personal and academic development.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality of provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. All pupils are admitted to the school with significant histories of challenging behaviour. Due to the excellent strategies which are consistently applied by all staff, pupils' behaviour rapidly improves. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. During the inspection, pupils were polite, courteous and showed an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They enjoy school and attendance is good. Many parents, who responded to the inspection questionnaire or spoke directly to the inspector, commented on the wonderful impact which the school has had on their child's behaviour and attitude to school. A typical parental comment was:

'It is a fabulous school which provides support and confidence building to all children. My son is very happy to attend school due to the wonderful teaching staff and fabulous teaching assistants, he enjoys school. It's a joy to see how much he has progressed in all areas. I could not be happier with the school and what it has provided for my son.'

Pupils are given many opportunities to experience success which leads to improved self-esteem and confidence. Pupils at Lakeside School are keen to participate in activities that bolster their feelings of self-worth. Each lunchtime all the staff sit with the pupils to share their mealtime together. This is a family occasion and everyone mixes well. There is excellent guidance to encourage healthy eating and good table manners. The pupils enjoy the social side of lunch and there are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils volunteer to help with routines throughout the day, such as the setting out of equipment, carrying out monitor duties and in saying grace before and after meals. Pupils' views and opinions are considered in Fair Trade steering committee meetings, Eco-team meetings and assembly debates. Pupils enjoy introducing their peers and the staff in their classrooms. Pupils develop concern for the global community through projects relating to Fair Trade, and links with Vengadu (a children's orphanage in India). Over the past two years, pupils on the Fair Trade team have been visiting local church halls and community centres to sell Fair Trade produce to local people and to raise awareness of Fair Trade issues.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of all pupils is outstanding. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Pupils say they feel safe and can turn to an adult for help if they need to. Staff are vigilant in their supervision of pupils. Risk assessments are completed to help ensure the safety and well-being of all staff and pupils, such as when a school trip is taking place. Staff are suitably

trained in child protection and first aid procedures. All the required checks are made on staff appointments to ensure pupils are safeguarded. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices through the guidance given by staff at the breakfast club and at lunchtime. A good range of fresh fruit and vegetables is always available on the menus. Regular exercise is provided including opportunities for swimming and gymnastics.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required safeguarding checks on staff, such as those by the Criminal Records Bureau, are made and are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively, safely and securely. Indoors on the ground floor, the school provides three classrooms each with a computer and interactive plasma screens which are used well to deliver lessons and engage the pupils. There is a good-sized hall used for assemblies and dining. Located on the second floor are a fourth classroom and offices. On the top floor is a library and a speech and language base. Outdoors the school has developed several play areas on soft surfaces and grass. There is a garden area with a plastic greenhouse together with a covered seating area. The lake which adjoins the school field is used for science activities.

Provision of information

The school provides clear and accurate information via the website, in regular newsletters and in the school prospectus. Annual written reports about pupils' attainment and progress are greatly improved since the last inspection. Parents comment about the very good communication with the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy and procedures fully meets the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure that school improvement plans make clear links between the impact of improving teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Develop and improve the depth of analysis of pupils' progress in order to identify the progress of specific groups or cohorts over time and thereby strengthen the overall evaluation of the school's improvement and performance.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' planning so that the expectations of what pupils will learn from the activities in lessons are sharp and clear.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special		
Date school opened	January 2001		
Age range of pupils	5-13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 17	Girls: 3	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 17	Girls: 3	Total: 20
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,995		
Address of school	Naylors Road Liverpool L27 2YA		
Telephone number	0151 4877211		
Email address	admin@lakesideschool.uk.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Size		
Proprietor	Mr James Bowers		