

# Inspection of Lyme Brook Independent School

90 King Street, Newcastle Under Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 1JB

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Inspection dates: 19 and 21 September 2023

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a small school with a big heart. The well-established ethos of kindness is shared by all members of the school community. This means that the school is a safe and happy place to be.

Pupils who have not attended school for long periods of time enjoy coming to school. They attend daily and arrive on time, ready to learn. Pupils say that staff understand them.

Expectations are high. The majority of pupils behave well. They say that bullying is rare, and unkindness is not tolerated. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. These strong relationships support pupils' learning well.

The school is aspirational and all staff want the best for their pupils. Most pupils engage well because teachers plan learning that meets their individual needs. On the rare occasion when this is not the case, pupils struggle to remember what they have been previously taught. This means pupils do not always do as well as they could.

Alongside the taught curriculum, pupils access opportunities outside of the classroom. They enjoy trips and visits that enhance their learning experiences.

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

Many pupils have experienced disruption in their learning, often attending several previous schools. Staff work hard to support pupils back into education. The culture is caring and nurturing. This means pupils attend well and arrive at school on time.

The curriculum is broad with suitable ambition. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. The school makes sure pupils have opportunities to practise basic skills in English and mathematics regularly. In key stage 2, pupils learn the basics of grammar and features of text. This prepares them well for key stage 3, where they learn to analyse poetry with more complex language. The majority of learning is well planned, taking into account what pupils know already. This is particularly strong in science. In science, for instance, content is well sequenced so that pupils can learn and remember more. Pupils speak with enthusiasm when they recall what they have been previously taught.

In a few cases where learning is not as consistently well planned, the work given to pupils does not enable them to meet the aims of the curriculum. In addition, pupils occasionally repeat tasks that they are already capable of performing. This slows their learning and means that a minority of pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and most pupils have an education, health and care plan. Teachers take pupils' needs into account when planning learning. They adapt their teaching well for most pupils.

Pupils enjoy reading. The school makes sure that this is given high priority. Pupils are provided with appropriate support to help them become fluent readers. In addition, pupils access a range of books across a variety of genres. They also enjoy regular trips to the library. Reading takes place every day, and there are regular opportunities to read in other subjects. Pupils recall the content and speak enthusiastically about books they have read. All of this means that pupils are developing a love of reading and building their confidence, including when reading aloud.

The curriculum to support personal, health and social education is planned in accordance with the needs of pupils. The school makes sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the community and online. Pupils also know about budgeting. Careers education helps pupils to think about their future plans. Pupils have visited local colleges and universities as well as meeting employers. They are well prepared for their next stages.

The ethos of kindness is understood by all. Pupils generally behave well because the behaviour policy and expectations are clear and consistently implemented by staff. Pupils say that school helps them to make friends and that bullying is not tolerated. They say that if someone is unkind, teachers will resolve any problems.

The school has carefully considered the relationships and sex education curriculum. The content is planned with the support of the school's therapist to ensure that the content is appropriate and that it is delivered with sensitivity. Pupils learn about safe and appropriate relationships, consent, personal space and sexual health.

Outside of taught lessons, pupils access a wide range of trips and visits. They speak positively about these experiences, including trips to museums and places of worship. These enhancements to learning help pupils to develop their social and cultural understanding of the world.

The school does not have a governing body. The work of the school is overseen by the proprietor. Through regular meetings, reviews and external scrutiny, the proprietor ensures that the independent school standards are consistently met. The proprietor maintains oversight of safeguarding to ensure that processes are followed. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 as outlined through its comprehensive accessibility policy and plan.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- On rare occasions, the planned work given to pupils does not always enable them to achieve the aims of the curriculum. This is because the work is not adapted well enough to meet the individual needs of pupils. This slows some pupils' learning. The school should ensure that staff consistently give pupils work that meets the individual needs of all pupils. This will ensure that all pupils are able to learn more and remember more.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146982
<b>DfE registration number</b>	860/6051
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10284436
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	7
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Prestige Adolescent Care and Education Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Adrian Colerick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Natalie Sanderson
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£39,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 987 520
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://lymebrookschoo.org.uk/">http://lymebrookschoo.org.uk/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:natalie@lymebrookschoo.org.uk">natalie@lymebrookschoo.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	10 to 12 December 2019

## Information about this school

- Lyme Brook Independent School is located in Newcastle, Staffordshire. It offers places to pupils ages eight to 16 who have social and emotional difficulties. At present, there are no key stage 4 pupils on roll at the school.
- The school was last inspected in December 2019, when it was judged to be good in all areas.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## 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.

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

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects. Curriculum plans for key stage 4 pupils were also reviewed.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of key policies, including those relating to curriculum, behaviour, anti-bullying, admissions, complaints and health and safety. The lead inspector also toured the premises to check for compliance with the independent school standards.
- 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.

## Inspection team

Melanie Callaghan-Lewis, lead inspector    Ofsted Inspector

David Hermitt    Ofsted Inspector

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