

# Lincoln House School

Linkway & Linkwood House, 25–27 Clifton Street, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 0QZ

## Inspection dates

17–18 April 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Sixth form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school provides a safe and inspiring environment for pupils who have suffered trauma and missed periods of their education in the past. Pupils value the school and the highly positive relationships they form while there.
- Excellent communication between home, therapeutic and education staff, through weekly meetings, ensures that pupils receive consistent and holistic support. Staff all celebrate pupils' achievements and support their needs effectively.
- The school's work to promote pupils' welfare and develop their personal and social skills is outstanding. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. They discover new talents and rightly take great pride in their achievements.
- Pupils show respect for the school and everyone in it. Their behaviour is impeccable.
- Leaders promote consistently good teaching. It is particularly effective in mathematics, English literature, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and creative subjects. Teachers' in-depth subject knowledge and enthusiasm for these subjects inspire pupils.
- Pupils make good progress from very varied starting points. Teaching and learning is successfully personalised to meet pupils' varied learning needs and support their aspirations.
- Teachers know the pupils well and plan work that interests them. However, assessment systems are not developed fully and there are times when the work set for pupils does not build systematically on what has gone before.
- Pupils acquire key literacy skills well in English language lessons but they are not developed as well as they could be in other subjects.
- Leaders are keen to develop partnership working further to extend the curriculum offer to include vocational education and a wider range of GCSEs for the most able pupils.
- The sixth form is fully integrated into the school and is good. Sixth-form students contribute positively and are excellent role models for behaviour.
- Strategic leaders are knowledgeable and quality assure the work of the school thoroughly. Policies and procedures are high quality.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop partnership work with other schools in the Care4Children group to share expertise, develop best practice and extend the curriculum offer.
- Build on strengths in teaching and assessment to deepen pupils' learning by:
  - refining assessment procedures in order to check pupils' progress through syllabuses and plan teaching that builds systematically on pupils' prior learning in all subjects
  - making sure that the most able pupils can access GCSEs in subjects other than English and mathematics, where appropriate
  - reinforcing and developing pupils' key literacy skills across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders are ambitious for pupils and have established a culture of high expectations for staff and pupils. The school has been refurbished to a high standard and proprietors have invested in quality resources and training for staff. Pupils are respectful of the environment and do their part to maintain it. All staff are highly positive about the school.
- The lead teacher and supporting instructor are knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers. They develop constructive and affirming relationships and inspire pupils to re-engage with education following periods of trauma.
- Pupils have extremely positive views of the school. They say, for example, 'Teachers give their all to promote our education; they give you extra time and always prepare fully.'
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development, based on their thorough checks on teaching and pupils' work. Their incisive self-evaluation informs improvement planning and staff development.
- Staff are highly motivated and take advantage of wide-ranging opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills. They attend training and complete online courses to ensure that they are up to date and well informed about how to support pupils' specific needs.
- Staff value the opportunities they have to work with colleagues from other schools in the Care4Children group to share expertise and best practice. Leaders are aware that there is scope to extend such opportunities further in order to optimise expertise across schools.
- The curriculum is broad and personalised to build on each pupil's prior learning, capitalise on their interests and support their aspirations. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' functional skills in literacy and mathematics, and their personal and social skills. The individualised teaching plans and therapeutic programmes make an excellent contribution to pupils' well-being, behaviour and personal development.
- Pupils are able to access a range of qualifications, including functional skills and GCSEs in English and mathematics. There are plans to extend the curriculum to include vocational subjects and broaden the GCSE offer, through closer working with other schools within the Care4Children group.
- Pupils' experiences are enriched with visits and additional activities outside school hours, for example to pursue personal projects and interests. Pupils have access to a good-sized outdoor area where they can enjoy gardening and outdoor exercise.
- There is a strong focus on supporting pupils to develop the personal and social skills they need to live in modern Britain. Pupils are taught about British values, and principles such as respect and democracy are reflected in the running of the school. They are taught about protected characteristics and show increasing respect for people regardless of age, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Topics such as 'the world environment and sustainability' and the study of different faiths provide pupils with an understanding of global issues and cultural differences. Pupils discuss current affairs each morning and consider moral issues in personal, social and health education lessons.

- Staff know pupils well and use assessment information effectively when preparing individual education plans. However, methods of tracking pupils' progress do not fully ensure that learning systematically builds on their knowledge and skills.
- Leaders work constructively with parents, carers and placing local authorities. They are kept well informed through regular reports and visits to the school.
- Communication between the home, therapeutic and education services is excellent. The weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings that involve the participation of a range of professionals are a key strength in provision. Where appropriate, pupils are involved in these meetings to ensure that their wishes remain at the heart of the school's work. The meetings ensure that all staff are well informed and can support pupils consistently in ensuring their well-being, celebrating their achievements and promoting their personal development.

## **Governance**

- The school does not have a governing body. Strategic leadership and oversight of the school's work is provided through the education director, also the proprietor, who reports to the managing director and executive board of the Care4Children group. He is supported by the head of education who quality assures the work of a number of schools in the area.
- Strategic leadership is highly effective. The Care4Children company runs a number of schools for pupils who have complex needs. Strategic leaders are knowledgeable and quality assure the work of the school thoroughly. Policies and procedures are of high quality and support the efficient and effective running of the school. Leaders and managers ensure that the independent school standards and all other requirements are met fully.
- The company invests in good-quality staff training and resources to support teaching and learning. They manage the performance of school leaders and teachers very effectively.
- Proprietors have a good understanding of the school's performance and a clear vision to develop the provision further. For example, they are looking to extend partnership working between schools and develop the vocational curriculum offer.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are vigilant in ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils. Information is shared effectively between care staff, therapists and education staff, ensuring a consistent approach to supporting pupils and managing their behaviour. Staff also engage with other agencies and professionals effectively to promote pupils' health and safety. The school's work to keep pupils safe from the dangers of abuse, sexual exploitation, extremism and inappropriate behaviours is exceptional.
- There are thorough procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. Proprietors and strategic leaders have also been subject to the relevant checks. Safeguarding and related policies are consistently applied and take account of current government requirements. The school does not have a website but policies are provided to carers and parents on request.
- Staff are thoroughly trained in safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, safe handling, fire safety and in supporting pupils' specific needs. They have an excellent understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

- The school premises are safe and secure. They have been refurbished to a high standard and are respected by pupils. There are robust risk assessments for school-based activities and visits out of school.
- Leaders engage effectively with carers and stakeholders to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. Pupils' attendance is tracked carefully and members of staff take appropriate action if pupils are absent from school.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching and learning is successfully personalised, in line with the school's policy, to meet pupils' learning needs and support them in their aspirations. Pupils typically start at the school having experienced significant trauma and with long gaps in their education. Teaching is tailored to pupils' individual educational, social and emotional needs and supports them to re-engage with education.
- Teaching is particularly strong in mathematics, English, PSHE and creative subjects. The in-depth subject knowledge of staff and their enthusiasm for these subjects inspire pupils to develop their interests and produce good-quality work.
- Poetry writing has become a passion of several pupils, reflecting the enthusiasm and inspiration of the teacher. As one pupil says, 'When I write poetry, it's not my hand that writes, it's my heart.' Pupils are rightly proud of their poetry, which is superbly crafted and thought-provoking.
- Teachers collaborate well to share their expertise and knowledge of the pupils. They know the pupils very well and plan work that interests them. However, assessment is not used to best effect to track pupils' progress through syllabuses and make sure that teaching builds systematically on pupils' prior learning in all subjects. Pupils' work does not, at times, build on what has gone before in terms of the difficulty level.
- Pupils' speaking and listening, literacy and mathematical skills are promoted extremely well in English and mathematics lessons. Pupils gain confidence in speaking and listening and develop their skills in reasoning and problem-solving effectively in several subjects. However, pupils' literacy skills are not developed and reinforced as well as they could be in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' computing skills are promoted well in a range of subjects as well as being taught separately.
- Teaching is supported by high-quality display and resources. The display in the English and creative rooms celebrates pupils' achievements and inspires them with good-quality examples of work.
- Homework is used very effectively to support learning. Pupils are able to access resources at the end of the school day to finish projects or get some help with their homework. The home staff liaise closely with teachers to ensure that pupils complete homework and get any help they need.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Outstanding**

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils' safety, personal development and welfare are the highest priorities of all staff. Pupils' personal skills are developed in all lessons; for example, through collaborative work, problem-solving, creative thinking and activities that build confidence in speaking and listening. Pupils are at ease because they know the school is safe and they feel valued.
- The highly positive relationships between staff and pupils are key to the success of the school. Staff focus on positive behaviours to support pupils to cope with past traumas and re-engage in education. The longer pupils are in school, the more they grow in confidence and self-esteem and develop positive attitudes.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe and staff ensure that they are safe in school. They say, for example, 'We are really well looked after. Teachers show they care and do everything to keep us safe.' Pupils feel secure enough to ask for help when they are struggling, share their feelings and reflect on their experiences. Pupils get on well together, showing respect and concern for each other.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to keep safe in the world beyond school, including from exploitation and extremism. They are taught how to keep safe when online and when out in the wider community. There is a strong focus on keeping physically and mentally healthy in PSHE lessons and therapy sessions, ensuring that pupils know how to minimise risks to their health and keep safe.
- Pupils have a detailed understanding of different types of bullying, and of behaviours that could unintentionally cause distress to others. They say that there has not been any bullying in school and records confirm that there have not been any bullying incidents since the school opened.
- Pupils contribute to planning for their personalised curriculum and activities, through weekly meetings and the 'My Say' forms. Their views are valued and their involvement in reflection and planning enables them to celebrate their achievements and take responsibility for their learning.
- High-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance support pupils to consider realistic and achievable options for the next stage in their education, employment or training. They are supported to develop interview skills, taught to manage budgets and develop business and marketing skills as they raise funds for charities.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have typically struggled to maintain positive, appropriate behaviour in previous school settings. They have experienced trauma and often have negative experiences of education. They have often not attended school for some time. During their time at Lincoln House, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and are supported to manage and control their own anxieties and behaviour successfully.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons is excellent. This is partly because teachers plan work that interests them and also because pupils respect and want to please their teachers. In science, for example, pupils were engrossed in dissecting owl pellets in order to investigate the food chain and piece together the skeletons of small mammals.
- Pupils treat the school and resources with respect. They look smart in their uniforms and look after their work. They show consideration for each other and are sociable in shared areas.

- Pupils' high attendance and punctuality reflect their increasingly positive attitudes to learning and enjoyment of this school. Unauthorised absence is rare. As one pupil said, 'Just coming to school is great in itself.'

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Pupils can enter school at any point in the year and at any age between 11 to 18. They may have had long gaps in their education, some have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, some are very able. Their starting points are consequently very varied. Teachers assess their skills in reading, spelling and grammar and mathematics effectively on entry to the school and take full account of any education, health and care plans to plan an individualised programme. This supports pupils to make good progress from their varied starting points.
- Qualifications are tailored to the learning needs and abilities of pupils. Most of the pupils need to develop functional skills and are supported to take a range of AQA Unit Awards and level 1 and level 2 qualifications in functional skills.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good academic progress and excellent progress with their behaviour.
- The most able pupils are supported to study GCSE units in English and mathematics. However, they have not been able to pursue other subjects in such depth. Leaders are currently looking into ways to share subject expertise across schools in order to extend the curriculum offer in the future.
- Vocational and work-related learning has been restricted to date but is developing through links with other Care4Children settings.
- Pupils' good progress in key skills, their broad experiences across the curriculum and excellent personal development prepare them well for their next steps.

### **Sixth form provision**

**Good**

- The sixth form is fully integrated into the school. Good leadership ensures that the sixth form has the same culture of high expectations and supportive atmosphere as the rest of the school.
- Good teaching supports students to make good progress from their starting points, especially in literacy and mathematical skills. Students are particularly inspired to produce high-quality work in creative writing and poetry. They are highly motivated and use their own time constructively to develop their knowledge and skills and be creative.
- Work to promote students' personal development, behaviour and welfare in the sixth form is outstanding. Students feel safe and are excellent role models for behaviour. They contribute positively to the nurturing ethos of the school, advising younger pupils on keeping safe and healthy, and supporting them to manage their own behaviour.
- Students have access to a range of qualifications depending on their abilities and learning needs. Students currently in school have completed a wide range of AQA Unit awards and level 1 and level 2 functional skills qualifications.
- Transition from school is planned carefully, so students feel confident in taking their next

steps in education, employment or training. They receive good-quality careers advice to help them make well-considered career choices. Life and work-related skills are developed well, supporting pupils to become more independent in areas such as managing finances and preparing healthy food.



## School details

Unique reference number	143858
DfE registration number	888/6067
Inspection number	10043788

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Tariq Verpalen
Headteacher	Hilary Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000
Telephone number	03455 215155
Website	None
Email address	<a href="mailto:hilary.smith@care4children.co.uk">hilary.smith@care4children.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is run by Care4Children, an organisation that runs a number of schools for pupils who have complex needs. The school opened in April 2017. This is the first inspection.
- The school is registered for six boys, aged 11 to 18, who have experienced social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There are currently four boys on roll, all of whom are young people who are looked after.
- Pupils can enter the school at any time and may stay for less than a month or several years. The school aims to re-engage pupils in education.
- The school does not have a dedicated website. Leaders provide all the required policies

and information about the school available to parents, carers and local authorities on request.

- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning and scrutinised pupils' work.
- The inspector had discussions with the education director and head of education for Care4Children, the principal clinical psychologist, the home manager, lead teacher and instructor. She spoke with pupils individually to gain their views of the school.
- Documentation was evaluated, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, policies, complaints procedure and information for parents.
- Four staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were taken into account. There were no responses from parents or carers to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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