

The Lighthouse Group (TLG) Centre

Independent school standard inspection report

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| Reporting Inspector | Jane Melbourne 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.

Information about the school

The Lighthouse Group (TLG) Centre is an independent day school with a Christian ethos for students aged 12 to 16 years who have been excluded from, or are at risk of being excluded from, maintained provision. The school is part of the wider work of The Lighthouse Group and aims to 'tackle the issues that underpin behavioural difficulties and to develop learning skills, leading to qualifications and re-integration into schools, further education or employment.' Places are usually commissioned by other schools or local authority's behaviour support services. Students attend the school in small groups of up to nine, two days per week for short courses lasting twelve weeks. Some students remain at school for longer periods in order to successfully complete their education. Seven students are only on the TLG school roll and eight are dually registered with other schools. If not educated elsewhere, some students are granted funding to attend on four days. Some undertake work placements for the remaining day(s).

The school is situated in Kingstanding, Birmingham and has recently moved to new premises. It opened in April 2007 and at the time of the inspection it was registered for up to 16 students. There are currently 15 part-time students on roll. None have been identified as requiring statements of special educational need. The last school inspection by Ofsted was in June 2009.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory because, despite many strengths, the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. There is good pastoral care and provision for the welfare, health and safety of students. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet current guidelines and the provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school successfully meets its aims in re-engaging students with their learning and in improving their attendance and behaviour, which is satisfactory overall. It also ensures each student continues with their education or finds apprenticeships or employment. The school meets all of the independent school regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. It is based on helping students to re-engage with their learning and developing their functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), alongside

developing each individual student personally, socially and emotionally. Schemes of work are drawn from published schemes and guidance in order to meet the requirements of examination boards and external awards. Each student follows a curriculum path that is tailored and planned to the level they are working at. Overall, there is good emphasis in developing students' basic skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. However, teaching areas are not always set up to properly nurture students' writing skills, including their handwriting. For example, students mostly write balancing their clipboards and paper on their knees. Expectations for writing are not followed through to all tasks set, although students are given regular opportunities for reading across all subject areas.

Science is not taught as a discrete subject, but is delivered in an integrated way through a number of topics linked to award schemes. Students may use their creative skills to meet design challenges and to work towards a digital and music technology award. They do not currently have other aesthetic and creative opportunities, such as dance or working with a range of media in two- and three-dimensions. There is a good physical education programme using on-site facilities and also through outdoor pursuits. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps students to develop self-confidence and build self-esteem. There is good emphasis on team work. Appropriate attention is paid to health issues, such as the physical effects of smoking, alcohol and drugs. The citizenship programme is specifically geared to helping students to understand their place in society, preparing them for the workplace and equipping them with skills for their future adult lives. Careers guidance is provided by the Connexions Service in conjunction with school staff. The school is pro-active in securing work placements for students and uses volunteers to increase vocational opportunities. With the very recent move of premises, links with the community are not as well established as previously. However, with their new base being in a youth and community centre, there are many sessions and facilities outside the school day that students are able to take part in. The school is actively seeking a new church partner with which to secure involvement and to support students' academic and personal needs.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Consequently, students make satisfactory progress. During the inspection, teachers planned lessons reasonably well, making learning relevant to the students. However, students were sometimes given insufficient time to get down to the actual task and therefore did not always complete what was required by the end of the lesson. Staff have sufficient subject knowledge, but their knowledge and expertise is not always used to greatest effect to promote students' good learning and progress in every subject area.

Staff deliver lessons enthusiastically, but they are not always questioning students sufficiently to check their understanding throughout the lesson. Once a task has been set, students receive excellent levels of individual support tailored to their own learning needs due to the high staffing ratios and strong relationships formed. They trust the staff to help them and they thrive on the dedicated attention they are given. Just occasionally, this inhibits the opportunities for them to work independently and they can become over-reliant on the adults that help them.

Staff provide a system of initial and on-going assessment to check what levels the students are working at and to determine for which awards and examinations they are most suited. This enables staff to focus on students' achievements at the end of each programme or unit of work, but they are not using this information to set students challenging targets for their next steps in learning. They are also less skilled in measuring students' academic progress and addressing why it is greater in some subjects than others. For example, students appear to make less progress in mathematics and ICT than in English. A relatively new bespoke electronic recording system is planned to help with this and measure students' academic progress in core subjects more accurately.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A strength of the school is in the strong professional relationships formed between staff and students and the opportunities provided to develop their social and emotional skills throughout the school day, including at break times. Students' progress in this respect is good, as was acknowledged by the students themselves, their parents and the referring bodies. Students' attendance and punctuality varies between satisfactory and good, but for all it is improving. Parents and referring bodies confirm students' attendance here is higher than it has been elsewhere. This is due to effective procedures in following up non-attendance and clear expectations made for the importance of regular attendance. Students' behaviour can be good but remains unpredictable. For most, it tends to improve as the academic year progresses. Parents confirm their child is more successful than in previous schools, happier and wanting to attend. These are major milestones for students who have previously been excluded from other schools or refusing to attend education. Students learn to manage their own behaviour and understand the consequences of it. A unique tool is the 'My day' electronic recording system where a student logs their feelings every day as they self-register, and then this is updated and monitored throughout the day. Daily discussions and an end of day summary bring a sense of positivity to each student's contribution. Staff are exemplary role models and help students develop a sense of right from wrong. They also effectively promote students' tolerance and harmony within the school community and more widely throughout society. Students acknowledge that staff care about them as individuals and that they feel safe. Students' successes are celebrated by regular feedback to parents, carers and their other schools. Staff also organise celebration events in recognition of students' significant achievements.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the students' welfare, health and safety is good. Students are supervised well at all times, including on any outings where risk is rigorously considered beforehand. Any form of disagreement is appropriately challenged and worked through to try and find a satisfactory resolve. Incidents of bullying are rare but effectively dealt with. Staff are well trained in managing students' behaviour.

They apply sanctions and rewards fairly and consistently. Staff are trained at the appropriate levels in child protection and there is a designated person responsible for this. Safeguarding procedures follow current requirements: the school has appropriate procedures in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff and others, and guidance is followed systematically. Students are encouraged to eat healthily and to maintain healthy lifestyles. They receive information related to sexual health, drugs, alcohol and substance misuse, and the risks associated with smoking, which although tolerated is continually worked upon towards cessation. Students undertake a full programme of physical activity and enjoyment is high. The school undertakes the routine checking of fire systems and portable appliances. Staff are trained in fire safety and first aid. Risk assessments on the premises are rigorous and the accommodation is well kept and maintained.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the necessary checks that have been made on the proprietors, staff and volunteers to confirm their suitability to work with young people. These are accurately recorded in a single central record.

Premises and accommodation at the school

All regulations for the premises are met. The school is newly located within a youth and community building and this provides improved facilities for students. The previous inspection report reported on a lack of outdoor space for students. This has been addressed by the new location, which includes good outdoor areas suitable for sport and recreation. The large hall is frequently used for teaching, although this is not ideal as there are no suitable tables to promote students' good quality writing. Generous space in the main hall allows for pool and table tennis tables. There is a well-equipped computer suite and good-sized gymnasium for physical education lessons and games. Students use the professional sound studio for music technology projects and awards. The school currently does not make use of the centre's kitchen or dance studio, although these are options as the school extends out its curriculum. Wash rooms and facilities for students who become ill meet requirements. The premises are owned by Birmingham City Council and as such are secure and well maintained.

Provision of information

The school continues to provide strong links with parents, carers and outside agencies, including students' other schools and the referring bodies. Parents welcome the regular updates on their child's progress through regular telephone calls or text messages. Parents and carers meet with other stakeholders for reviews every six weeks and a written report is provided termly. These reports provide a basic summary of students' achievement in their functional skills and in their personal development. It outlines what they need to work on further. Not all areas of the curriculum are included in the reports, but wider skills and achievements are celebrated verbally or through the celebration events. The prospectus contains all of

the required information, although curriculum information is brief. The school is aware of the requirement to publish the particulars of academic performance in the preceding school year and of the number of complaints received. They recognise that although they make their complaints procedure available upon request, it would be more helpful to prospective parents to have a copy of the policy in the parents' pack.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure is clearly written, is fair and meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all of 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:

- improve the use of assessment data by analysing trends in performance of individuals and groups of students; adapting teaching strategies, and making best use of staff knowledge and skills to ensure the good progress of all students in all main subjects that the school is required to offer
- monitor the teaching of mathematics closely to address why students appear to do less well in mathematics than in English
- improve the quality of the curriculum by:
 - providing more time to help pupils learn
 - thoroughly plan for students to have sufficient scientific; technological; aesthetic and creative experiences
 - encourage students to make a greater contribution to community life
 - raising expectations for writing across all areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

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|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

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 | | ✓ | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|

School details

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| School status | Independent | | |
| Type of school | Alternative provider for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties | | |
| Date school opened | April 2007 | | |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 0 | Girls: 0 | Total: 0 |
| Number on roll (part-time pupils) | Boys: 14 | Girls: 1 | Total: 15 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs | Boys: 0 | Girls: 0 | Total: 0 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | Average £1991 | | |
| Address of school | 610 Kingstanding Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham B44 9SH | | |
| Telephone number | 0121 314 5587 | | |
| Email address | stewart.dance@tlg.org.uk | | |
| Headteacher | Stewart Dance | | |
| Proprietor | Tim Morfin | | |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

27 September 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of The Lighthouse Group (TLG) Centre, Birmingham, B44 9SH

I visited you recently to find out what your new premises were like, how well the school were supporting you and how much progress you were making. Thank you to those of you who attend on a Monday and Tuesday who talked with me. I also spoke with some of your parents and carers and other adults involved in placing you in the school. These are some of my findings and recommendations.

- Your new premises are suitable; there are good facilities for you to use.
- Staff care about you and keep you safe. They are working hard to make sure you all do as well as you can, including passing examinations and gaining awards, and going into further education or the world of work when you complete your time at TLG.
- You are attending more regularly; are getting better at arriving in time for the start of the school day and your behaviour is improving.
- You are making satisfactory progress in your learning overall, although this is usually better in English than in mathematics.
- Your school curriculum is satisfactory. Those of you who do not go to school elsewhere do not have enough scientific; technological and creative experiences. You also do not have enough involvement in the community outside of the school
- There are not always good enough opportunities for you to practise your writing skills through the English lessons and in other subjects. It doesn't help your handwriting when you are balancing your clipboards on your knees.

I have also asked staff to look at how much time you spend learning in a school day and create extra time for more exciting activities in a wider range of subjects.

I hope that being at TLG is just the start of you achieving what you are capable of, and that you leave confident and ready to make a full contribution to your chosen career or job choice.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne
Her Majesty's Inspector