

Lakeside School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	3416082
Unique Reference Number	133262
Inspection number	316841
Inspection dates	6 – 7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Lakeside School is an approved special school located on the outskirts of Liverpool, near Huyton. There are 25 pupils on roll aged between 7 and 13, of whom four are girls. Each pupil has a statement of special educational needs relating to a wide range of communication and learning difficulties including some who have additional challenging behaviours. Seven pupils are looked after. The school, part of the Witherslack Group, was registered in 2001 and its first inspection was in November 2002.

Evaluation of the school

Lakeside School provides a good quality of education with several outstanding features. The pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and an excellent curriculum. The pupils' behaviour and personal development are excellent as is the quality of welfare, health and safety. The school meets all but one of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good and is effective in meeting the school's aims. The outstanding curriculum is supported by appropriate schemes of work drawn from the National Curriculum and relevant guidance for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHEC) and religious education.

The school places a strong emphasis on the development of communication skills as well as the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum fully meets the requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs. The pupils have regular access to speech and language therapy that meets their specific needs. Where appropriate, pupils may also work with an occupational therapist in order to create the correct physical conditions to enable improved access to the curriculum. The curriculum very successfully maximises opportunities for learning and success.

Other subjects are taught within topics that include science, geography, history, information and communication technology, art and food and design technologies.

This themed approach also promotes regular use of speech and language alongside creative arts. The promotion of the pupils' economic well-being, enjoyment and achievement by the recognition of success and the importance of working with others are firmly embedded in the school day.

Extra-curricular activities are limited by daily transport requirements although the school makes very good provision for competitive sports and adventurous outdoor activities that include an annual residential visit. The chess club is very popular as are the wide range of visits to the community.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and sometimes outstanding leading to similar rates of progress by pupils. The strongest teaching, for example, in English, is very well planned and every opportunity is taken to engage pupils in all activities. Skilled questioning ensures that pupils and staff know how much has been learned and where extra support is required. Age-appropriate humour is frequently used, staff know their pupils well and relationships within the school community are strong and have a significant impact in meeting the pupils' academic and behavioural needs. High expectations of pupils coupled with good staffing ratios ensure excellent behaviour is the norm in lessons. During swimming lessons, these features also apply when making the most of school and leisure centre staff's expertise. On rare occasions, due to their special educational needs, pupils' behaviour may cause difficulties. These instances are promptly and effectively managed by diligent well-trained staff. Teachers work well with resources, including computers and linked interactive whiteboards. There are good examples of staff making innovative resources to meet individual needs. Occasionally, tasks provided for pupils have too little challenge for the most able and the pace of lessons is too slow.

The teachers' assessment of individual pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is effective for the large majority of pupils. The recent adoption of a new assessment system promises to be more useful in gauging progress over time for a small minority of pupils whose test scores currently show little progress. The assessment of progress in topic-based work is underdeveloped. Literacy and numeracy assessment data is used well to develop personal learning programmes and some setting by ability. Assessment of non-academic aspects are well established and pupils make excellent progress in their attitudes to learning, interpersonal skills and behaviour.

The headteacher, in post for almost a year and a half, has in a relatively short time developed good self evaluation, for many aspects of the school's performance are good. For example, monitoring of classroom practice and support for teachers have provided her with a good overview of teaching quality. The systematic evaluation of whole-school academic achievement by subject leaders is at an early stage.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding due to the excellent curriculum and support provided.

The pupils' spiritual development is promoted very effectively through carefully planned assemblies with religious themes, prayers and moments of reflection. Religious education also gives useful insight into the beliefs of other faiths in their local communities. Moral issues are woven into many areas of school life and pupils play an active role and understand their responsibilities to others and the environment. For example, they regularly fund-raise for others locally and abroad. They willingly support the school's fair trade initiatives. The school's exciting eco project allows the pupils to develop a good understanding of humanity's impact on the environment and the need to consider future generations. Their cultural development is promoted well through visits to theatres, sporting fixtures and a link with an orphanage in India. The school promotes awareness of a multicultural society through teaching pupils about tolerance and harmony and aspects of race in discreet lessons and as part of the PSHEC curriculum.

Their attendance and behaviour are outstanding and they clearly enjoy being at school. Suitable emphasis is given to encouraging the pupils to manage their behaviour, gain self esteem and take pride in their achievements. They fully understand and appreciate the school's rewards and sanctions procedures. For example, the reward system culminating in the 'blue moon award' is highly regarded by pupils. All are offered and accept responsibilities for helping the school to run smoothly. As a result, Lakeside School is a very pleasant place to be for pupils, staff and visitors alike.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The small numbers in each class and the regard for individuals means that the pupils receive excellent levels of attention and supervision from staff. Routinely, the school provides nutritious meals, including breakfast, and regular exercise to enable the pupils to remain fit and healthy. The school's pastoral staff and procedures ensure the pupils' emotional needs are very well met. The rich curriculum provides many opportunities to promote the pupils' welfare, health and safety. When required, pupils are supported in additional fitness programmes that have a positive impact upon their well-being. The school has very effective working relationships with external agencies and visiting on-site specialists to ensure pupils' additional needs are well-served.

The school's policies are very effective in promoting the pupils' health, safety and welfare on site and whilst on visits to the community. The supervision of pupils in school is appropriate at all times and trips out of school are supported by risk

assessments and a comprehensive written policy. All staff have undertaken appropriate training to ensure they are conversant with physical management techniques when required. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding are good. Pupils indicate they feel confident to talk to staff if they have problems. The school's policies are effectively implemented regarding the promotion of good behaviour and administration of first aid. Accidents and incidents are recorded in detail and appropriately followed up.

Routine attention to health and safety is good. During the inspection, a small number of minor health and safety observations were brought to the school's attention. Systematic checks are made on portable electrical equipment and all issues related to fire safety are exemplary. Registers of attendance are maintained regularly and the school's recent attention to its admissions register has ensured that it now contains all the required information. The school has drawn up an appropriate plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietor has appropriate safeguards to ensure the pupils do not encounter unsuitable adults. Staffing and recruitment procedures for permanent and temporary staff are informed by the most recent guidance.

School's premises and accommodation

The school's premises and accommodation are good. There is an adequate number of classrooms and teaching areas for the numbers on roll. Firm plans are in place to expand the teaching accommodation on the site.

The classrooms range in size and careful thought is given to the numbers of pupils in each group. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of all available space and the walls are used especially well for displays of pupils' achievements and other useful information to support learning. There is good provision for specialist food technology. The school library, dining hall and quiet area are well used. Designated rooms for therapists, the educational psychologist and administration ensure that all services are well provided for. The medical room caters for pupils who are ill during the school day. However, this room requires a wash-basin to fully meet the required regulation.

The outdoor play areas are excellent and afford numerous opportunities for safe play using high quality equipment. The lake enables the pupils to study science and technology topics and excellent use is made of the local community for swimming, team games and cultural events. The premises are very well maintained and in good decorative order. The shared use of the site by a local angling society is well managed outside school hours.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information is good and meets all requirements. The school maintains good contact with parents and carers by regular phone calls, newsletters, progress meetings and the home-school message books. The annual reviews of the pupils' statements of special educational need and for those in care are good. Some academic reports, however, say too little about what the pupils know, understand and can do in some subjects.

The school's attractive website is a source of useful information as is the prospectus. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they are very satisfied with the work of the school and information received from the school. Some parents commented, *'My child would not have an education if not for Lakeside They support both the child and the homemy child wants to come back and help at the school when he is older'*. The school routinely seeks their views about its effectiveness and uses the feedback well to improve further. The inspection findings agree with the parents' views. During the inspection no views were received from referring local authorities.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's recently revised complaints policy and procedures for handling complaints are clearly understood and meet requirements. The school has not received any formal written complaints in the last year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of the one listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill during the school day (paragraph 5 (l)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- continue to develop the new assessment system
- further develop the role of subject co-ordinators in self-evaluation
- provide more information in annual reports about what the pupils know understand and can do in all subjects.

School details

Name of school	Lakeside School		
DCSF number	3416082		
Unique reference number	133262		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 2001		
Age range of pupils	5-13		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 21	Girls: 4	Total: 25
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 21	Girls: 4	Total: 25
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 6	Girls: 1	Total: 7
Annual fees (day pupils)	£43,143-£65,165		
Address of school	Naylor's Road Liverpool L27 2YA		
Telephone number	0151487 7211		
Fax number	0151487 7214		
Email address	victoria@lakesideschool.uk.com		
Headteacher	Miss Victoria Jennins		
Proprietor	James Bowers – Witherslack Group		
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell		
Dates of inspection	6 – 7 November 2007		