

Inspection of Lord's Independent School

Brooklyn, Green Lane, Bolton BL3 2EF

Inspection dates: 14–16 January 2020

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

Lord's School is a place where pupils thrive and succeed. Pupils enjoy attending this school. They told us that it is like arriving at your second home each morning. Parents and carers value the caring ethos and the education the school provides for their children.

Pupils rise to the high expectations that staff have of them. They benefit from a well-designed, ambitious curriculum that is tailored to meet their individual needs. Pupils achieve well. Pupils told us that they are helped to overcome any obstacles to learning and become their 'true selves'.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of activities that enrich the curriculum. These opportunities enhance pupils' learning by providing new experiences for them to try. These include dry-slope skiing, fencing and martial arts.

Pupils are polite and behave well. Relationships with staff are very positive and help develop pupils' self-esteem and curiosity. Pupils are eager learners.

Pupils told us that they feel safe in school. They said that bullying was not tolerated by staff. Pupils found it difficult to recollect any incidents of bullying. Pupils are confident that staff would act immediately to resolve any incidents of bullying if they occurred.

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

Leaders are knowledgeable about the independent school standards. They have ensured that all independent school standards are met. Leaders maintain the accommodation and premises of the school to a suitably high standard. They ensure that classrooms are adequately lit and that pupils can hear what is said in lessons. Leaders have ensured that they meet their obligations under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. This relates to planning appropriate measures that allow all pupils and staff to access the school site safely.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum which promotes the school's nurturing ethos. It aligns closely to the expectations of the national curriculum. Planning across the curriculum develops pupils' knowledge by building on what they already know. Pupils study a wide range of subjects leading to GCSE examinations. Sometimes leaders make careful changes to how the curriculum is taught in some subjects. This is so that it meets the individual needs of some pupils and allows them to succeed.

Leaders of subjects are well-qualified and knowledgeable in their subjects. Planning in these subjects enables pupils to learn more and remember more. A few subject leaders, for example in history, are quite new to the school. They are developing in their roles. There are few opportunities for subject leaders to work with each other and other staff. As a result, they do not identify or make use of the links between subjects to help enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Leaders recognise that reading is the key which unlocks learning in other subjects. Reading is a core part of the school curriculum, particularly in the prep department. Here, pupils read with adults frequently. They have a secure understanding of phonics and read well. Pupils remember what they have been taught. They spoke of the new vocabulary they had gained from poetry lessons. Teachers inspire pupils to enjoy and understand a wide range of literature, including texts such as 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck. Through this appreciation of literature, pupils develop a rich vocabulary. For example, secondary pupils expressed mature views about the passionate and ardent tones they chose to use in formal letter writing.

Teachers in other subjects also have high ambitions for their pupils. They have excellent knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teachers plan activities that build pupils' knowledge on what they already know. Teachers use their assessments well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use their ongoing assessments to inform refinements to their lesson content. Teachers routinely recap knowledge from earlier lessons. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning and understanding.

Occasionally, some pupils can succumb to their anxieties and find it difficult to concentrate. Teachers deal with this sensitively to help pupils to re-engage in learning.

Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average for secondary schools. Pupils feel at home in school and attend well. Leaders ensure that registers are completed accurately and that they adhere to regulatory requirements. When necessary, leaders work with the local authority to promote the importance of frequent attendance.

Parents are kept informed about their children's achievements through detailed reports. Parents told us that they appreciate leaders' open-door policy. They said that leaders are always available at the end of the phone.

Older pupils receive impartial advice and guidance about careers from external experts. This allows them to make informed choices about their future. Pupils are aspirational. Most want to continue their education in local sixth-form colleges and then go on to university. Some pupils want to seek employment in the emergency services or the armed forces.

Pupils learn about the wider world. This includes promoting pupils' understanding of respect and tolerance of other faiths, beliefs and lifestyles. Pupils learn about healthy living, British values and the financial world. However, the way the teaching of this is organised means that some pupils may develop gaps in knowledge. For example, economic education is taught mainly through business studies. This can limit the access to those pupils who do not choose this option. Pupils play an active part in charitable activities within their community. These include helping older members of society with gardening and raising funds for children's charities.

Leaders take appropriate actions to manage staff workloads. This includes the provision for staff to work part time and amendments to staff timetables, when possible, without detriment to pupils' education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and all staff at Lord's Independent School are committed to keeping pupils safe. They are vigilant and receive up-to-date training. All appropriate checks are completed to ensure the suitability of staff. Leaders keep detailed records of any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare or safety. They share this information with the right people when it is necessary to protect pupils who may be at risk of harm. The proprietor makes sure that the school's internet connection is subject to appropriate monitoring and filtering to keep pupils safe from online threats.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Subject leaders have few opportunities to collaborate to evaluate and develop the curriculum. This means subjects are routinely taught in isolation and that opportunities to use the links between subjects to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding are missed. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have appropriate time to work together. They should also ensure that subject leaders make effective use of these opportunities to use the links between subjects to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is taught through a range of different subjects. This means that some pupils may miss out on some aspects of learning and develop gaps in their knowledge. This is particularly evident in the promotion of pupils' understanding of financial systems and economic education. Leaders should refine the way they teach the PSHE curriculum and, in particular, economic education, so that pupils do not develop gaps in their learning.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	105269
DfE registration number	350/6000
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10112060
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Anne Ainsworth
Headteacher	Anne Ainsworth
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,200 to £6,600
Telephone number	01204 523731
Website	www.lordsschool.co.uk
Email address	info@lordsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school has an extremely low number of pupils of sixth-form age.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- During the inspection, we looked in detail at English, including reading, mathematics, history and science. This involved discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils. We also listened to some primary-aged pupils read.
- We spoke to the headteacher, who is also the proprietor and the special educational needs coordinator, the deputy headteacher and the school bursar. We also met with the local authority officer who was working with the school to provide impartial careers education. A telephone discussion was held with a local authority educational access officer who places children in the school.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out during the appointment of staff. We also looked at records of pupils' attendance. In addition, documentation and information relating to the independent school standards were also scrutinised.
- We spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the school day and considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including the 12 free-text comments. There were no responses to the pupil or staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Shutt

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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