

Inspection of The Llewellyn School and Nursery

Quex Park Estate, Birchington, Margate, Kent CT7 0BB

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 June 2022

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?

Pupils are proud of their school. Those who met with inspectors were polite, yet mildly mischievous at times, and confident to share their good humour. They told inspectors that there is much they like about the school. One parent said that their child did not really see the point of schools, but that he now comes to this one willingly. A group of older boys talked positively about the chances the school gives them to experience Taekwondo, horse riding and other sporting activities. Pupils shared that they feel safe and free from any form of bullying. They also reflected that, sometimes, some people do not apologise quickly enough when they need to.

This is a small school. Leaders and staff know pupils and their families very well. Pupils like this aspect of their school. They respect staff because they feel well cared for. Inspectors found that leaders and staff have appropriately high expectations of what pupils can do and can achieve. As a result, pupils thrive here. They work hard, have fun, and are making good progress in all aspects of their personal, social and academic development.

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

This is a good school that has improved since its last standard inspection. Much has been achieved in the last few years. Pupils and staff have settled well into the new, purpose-built school site. COVID-19 has impacted negatively on some aspects of school life. However, leaders and staff have pulled together. The school is full and moving forward again at pace. A new chair is about to strengthen the small team that supports the proprietor and provides governance for the school. All of the independent school standards continue to be met.

The school's curriculum continues to evolve. Leaders and staff are constantly refining the way subjects are taught and learning is delivered. Most pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. All have an education, health and care plan. Teaching is very personalised and delivered in small groups or on a one-to-one basis.

Pupils enjoy books. They enjoy reading and discussing stories with each other. Pupils were excited when telling an inspector about their current class book, *The Iron Man*. They wanted the teacher to 'read more today', totally intrigued about what would happen next in the book. Pupils were confident to read with an inspector present. This included pupils who communicate through sign language and are developing their reading fluency with the help of specialist staff.

Phonics sessions are delivered by staff who are knowledgeable and experienced. Most resources associated with the school's phonics scheme are in place and being used by staff effectively. However, a wider range of books, including those linked to the school's phonics scheme, would strengthen the school's reading programme.

Much of the curriculum is delivered through topics and themes. Pupils like this approach because staff are skilled at pitching learning at the right level. Teachers take pupils' personal interests into account as far as possible, though they constantly look to broaden pupils' outlooks on the world.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum has appropriate breath. They are aware that older pupils are now at the stage where they can begin to gain meaningful qualifications. This includes in mathematics, where some pupils are making increasingly positive progress. It also includes accessing accredited Life Skills qualifications. These will help pupils become more independent as they move towards post-16 provision.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of additional trips and activities the school provides. Often these are very bespoke in order to meet the needs of each pupil. Much of the curriculum is delivered in the school's extensive and ever-developing grounds. Pupils love being able to help with the goats and other animals. They talked about their enjoyment of helping to plan the recent trip to Chessington. This included checking their itinerary and using map skills to plan rides and to cut waiting times in the park.

Staff prioritise supporting pupils' personal development at every stage. They understand that good communication is key. Many staff have additional specialist qualifications that help with this. Pupils are also supported well by the school's personal, social and health education programme. This includes appropriately pitched relationships and sex education. Pupils learn about concepts such as fair trade and ethical spending. They have a growing understanding of equalities and different cultures. They also benefit from accessing a range of additional technologies and learning how to use these safely to support their learning.

Staff monitor pupils' attendance and behaviour well. The recent introduction of an online programme to record behaviour and safeguarding incidents has been embraced by staff. Leaders are fully aware that some refinements now need to be made to enable staff to benefit fully from the advantages the online system brings.

Staff are proud to work at the school and are positive about the support they receive from leaders. They feel that leaders are considerate and take their well-being and workload into account. The overwhelming majority of parents who replied to Ofsted's questionnaire were equally positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff understand the extra vulnerabilities that pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities face. Leaders have ensured that key staff have accessed additional training commensurate with their responsibilities or to support the specific individual requirements of pupils.

Staff understand what to do if they have concerns. They have confidence in leaders to do the right thing when needed. Oversight from a named governor helps leaders

to keep pupils and staff safe. This includes ensuring that the school meets all aspects of the independent school standards linked to welfare, health and safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

Information for the school and proprietor

- The school is in the process of changing from a paper-based to an online system for managing behaviour and safeguarding records. Leaders and staff are beginning to address the teething problems that inevitably come with such a move. Leaders are aware that work needs to be done to ensure that the system is fully functional and provides staff with the many benefits such a system is capable of providing. Plans are in place for this. However, leaders need to make this a top priority for the start of the new school year. This will enable staff to become even more effective in their work to monitor and support pupils with their behaviour, as well as modernising and streamlining the school's safeguarding record system.
- Although adequate for such small numbers, the school's resources for developing pupils' reading skills further could be better. Quite simply, the school now needs to expand its stock of good-quality reading material. Part of this is down to the school's success in teaching pupils to read. A new phonics programme is in place and is being implemented effectively. As a result, pupils who struggled to read in the past are making accelerated progress. Their confidence and love of reading are palpable. Reading books has become enjoyable and pupils are hungry for more. Leaders need to capitalise on this success without delay.

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.

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	142859
DfE registration number	886/6143
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10243546
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	2 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Llewellyn School and Nursery CIC
Chair	Sara Llewellyn
Headteacher	Sara Llewellyn (School leader)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,000 to £70,000
Telephone number	01843 845 033
Website	www.thellewellyn.school
Email address	ls.headteacher@gmail.com
Dates of previous inspection	3 to 5 July 2018

Information about this school

- The Llewellyn School and Nursery caters for pupils who have profound, multiple learning difficulties, including multisensory, communication and physical development needs.
- The school is registered for up to 14 pupils aged from two to 25.
- At the time of this inspection, the school did not have any pupils in the post-16 age range or children in early years.
- The proprietor company has a sole director who is also the school leader. The school has a small governing board. The board works with the proprietor to provide governance. A new chair has just been appointed.
- The school's first standard inspection took place in July 2018.
- The school was subject to a material change inspection in February 2019 to extend the upper age range of pupils from 12 to 16. This material change was approved.
- The school had a second material change inspection in February 2020 to approve a change of premises. Unmet standards were found at that time leading to the school having to produce an action plan. The action plan was approved and the monitoring inspection that followed in May 2021 found that all previously unmet standards were met.
- The Department for Education further increased the age range of the school from two to 16 to two to 25 in August 2021.
- The school does not currently use 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 held a wide range of meetings with the school leader, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the new chair of the governing board. He also met or talked to two different officers from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils knowledge over time.
- Inspectors toured the school's premises and accommodation. They checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection in order to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted's Parent View survey as well as an email submitted by a parent. The lead inspector also talked to a parent at the start of day three of the inspection. Ofsted's staff survey was also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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