

Inspection of Tower Learning Centre Independent School

316 Church Street, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 3QE

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 July 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are nurtured and cared for at Tower Learning Centre. Several pupils have experienced regular periods of disruption to their learning before joining the school. Pupils enjoy warm and trusting relationships with staff. Pupils learn to manage their emotions well and make positive decisions about how to behave and access their learning. This enables them to behave well.

Bullying is rare. Pupils know the different forms that bullying can take. They know what to do should it occur. They have every confidence that staff would help them if they had a problem or concern.

Pupils are happy at school. There is a calm and respectful culture which helps them to feel safe. This is because all staff know pupils well. Pupils benefit from a range of clubs and experiences. This includes science club, visits to local parks and trampolining.

Leaders have carefully considered how to develop the curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs. This helps pupils to enjoy their lessons. They are keen to learn more. Staff have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils live up to these high expectations and have positive aspirations for their future.

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

Leaders, including the chair of the proprietor company, have a clear vision and strongly held values aimed at developing every pupil, both academically and personally. They are determined that all pupils will succeed. Subject leaders are appropriately skilled and have thought carefully about the essential knowledge they want pupils to learn and when they should learn it. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from this curriculum. This means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives and learning.

Leaders' high expectations ensure that each pupil achieves well. Staff deliver the intended curriculum effectively. Teachers use praise well in order to support pupils to succeed and to develop pride in their work and learning. Lessons are calm and orderly and are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Staff carefully assess pupils' prior understanding and learning effectively in the majority of subjects. They provide regular feedback for pupils to improve their work. However, assessment strategies are still developing in some subjects. In these subjects, pupils sometimes move on to new learning before their prior learning is secure.

Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. They work towards the same challenging learning goals as other pupils. Leaders identify pupils' needs. They ensure pupils receive the provision and support they need. This means that teachers

adapt their teaching effectively to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have created an environment that develops pupils' love of reading. Staff introduce pupils to everyday routines of reading. For instance, selecting books, reading texts for research, finding information online or listening to audiobooks. Pupils enjoy the diverse range of books from the library that they have helped to choose. The curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils read a range of appropriate texts and build up their reading and comprehension skills well. Staff quickly identify and support pupils who need help to catch up.

The personal, health, social and economic education (PHSE) curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about fundamental British values. Pupils' understanding about respecting differences between people and different religions is strong. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyle habits. Leaders place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' mental health. Pupils receive appropriate careers information, advice and guidance. Leaders have developed strong links with local employers. This helps pupils to develop their employability skills.

The chair of the proprietor company, the advisory board and senior leaders ensure that the independent standards are consistently met. They are knowledgeable, experienced and carry out their strategic role well. For example, regular checks ensure that pupils' welfare and safety are considered. The chair of the proprietor company provides effective challenge and support for leaders. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website for parents.

Staff have confidence in the school's leadership. Leaders are mindful to help staff manage their day-to-day workload. Staff are positive and feel well supported to help pupils learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear processes in place to keep pupils safe. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They receive regular, suitable safeguarding training. This helps staff to be alert to any signs that pupils might be at risk from harm. Staff understand how to recognise and report any concerns about a child's welfare. They know leaders take all concerns seriously. Leaders work well with external agencies, when required, to help ensure pupils' safety.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the PSHE education curriculum and through discussions.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, assessment strategies are still at an early stage of development. This means that pupils are sometimes introduced to new learning before their previous learning is secure. Leaders should ensure that assessment strategies in these subjects are developed so that pupils' learning builds on what they already know.

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

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| Unique reference number | 148568 |
| DfE registration number | 890/6010 |
| Local authority | Blackpool |
| Inspection number | 10225762 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 14 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 7 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 5 |
| Proprietor | Tower Learning Centre Limited |
| Chair | Kathryn Towers |
| Headteacher | Kim McCormack |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £15,000 to £25,000 |
| Telephone number | 01253 290 949 |
| Website | www.tower-learning.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@tower-learning.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils who have struggled to cope in mainstream schools. Pupils have a history of challenging behaviour and/or poor school attendance.
- This was the first standard inspection of the school.
- Leaders do not use any 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 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 completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics and PHSE. As part of the deep dives, inspectors met with leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at pupils' work. They also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in science, religious education and history. Inspectors met pupils from the lessons visited and looked at their work. They met with the teachers from the classes visited.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. They also met with the designated safeguarding leads.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate provision and practice for pupils with SEND in the school.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work in this school.
- Inspectors reviewed key documents, including the school's self-evaluation form and monitoring records.
- Inspectors checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking into account responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also spoke with parents.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of the proprietor company and two members of the advisory board.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Phill Walmsley

Ofsted Inspector

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