

# Inspection of Tower Learning Centre Independent School

316 Church Street, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 3QE

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Inspection dates:

8 to 10 July 2025

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent  
school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This school provides strong support for pupils, who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), in a safe and nurturing environment. Staff prioritise pupils' emotional well-being. Relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of this welcoming school.

Pupils engage with their education because staff work closely with them to understand their specific needs. This is essential to improving pupils' long-term prospects, as many pupils have had a very disruptive experience before joining this school. Pupils' attitudes towards their education and behaviour improve significantly during their time here. Pupils behave well and this allows them to learn in a calm, orderly environment. They told inspectors that this helps them to concentrate on their learning.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. It has set out an ambitious curriculum for pupils. This is designed to give pupils the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the future. In many ways, pupils achieve well. They are well prepared for their next steps.

The school ensures that it prioritises pupils' wider development. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about life in modern day Britain. In addition, the school ensures that pupils learn life skills such as budgeting or cooking to help prepare them for future independent living.

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

The proprietor has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by staff. There are a variety of effective systems and processes in place to check that the school consistently provides the best education for pupils. Parents and carers are very positive about the school's provision. They value the school's approach to support their child.

The school has put in place a broad and balanced curriculum. This covers a range of academic and an increasing variety of vocational subjects. The school's curriculum builds towards recognised qualifications such as GCSEs or functional skills. In setting up its curriculum, the school has thought carefully about the knowledge pupils need to learn in many different subjects.

Many pupils, due to their earlier educational experiences, have extensive gaps in their understanding. Teachers check effectively on pupils' current understanding of different topics. This aids teachers to pinpoint what the next step is for pupils in their learning. Gaps in pupils' understanding reduce over time. As a result, pupils successfully build a rich, secure body of knowledge from their starting points.

Typically, pupils write accurately with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to review and edit their written

work. This sometimes results in them developing habits where their writing is not as accurate as it should be, including some grammatical errors continue. This affects the quality of pupils' writing.

Reading is a sharp priority in school. Pupils who find reading difficult receive effective support to help them to become more fluent, confident readers.

Throughout the English curriculum, pupils study a range of texts. There are books in the school's library which supports pupil to access stories and plays by different authors, poets and playwrights. However, this range of literature is not consistently championed across the school's curriculum as effectively as it could be. This means that there are limited opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and appreciation of a wide range of literature.

Typically, pupils with SEND are well supported by teachers across the school. The school identifies any additional needs which might not have been included in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. They provide timely support to help pupils with SEND.

The school is very successful in developing pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Overall, pupils take pride in their work. They are polite and show respect to each other, staff and visitors. They rarely disturb each other or lack concentration in class. Pupils settle into school well. They find a place of belonging. They attend school considerably more often than in the past. This is having a positive impact on them accessing the curriculum and wider opportunities which the school offers.

The school crafts the provision for pupils' wider development with care and precision. It provides every pupil with the opportunities that they require to become active citizens in modern Britain, including an increasing range of visits. For example, pupils attend trips to the local museum or bird sanctuary to enhance their learning in different topics. The school has implemented an effective, personalised personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum for pupils. This includes lessons around consent. Pupils learn to understand how to build positive relationships with both their peers and adults alike. The school provides pupils with effective relationships and sex education, tailored to pupils' needs.

The proprietor ensures that independent school standards (the standards) are consistently met. The school's premises are well maintained. Classrooms have sufficient lighting to enable staff and pupils to carry out their work well. If pupils become unwell during the day, there is an appropriate space for them to go and recuperate. The proprietor and school ensure that a suitable number of qualified first aid staff are on hand to support pupils if they have an accident at school. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(information for the school and proprietor)**

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills. This means that at times, they develop bad habits in their spelling, grammar and punctuation which affects the accuracy of their writing. The school should ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills so that they can communicate in writing more effectively.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their appreciation of different authors across different subjects. This means that they are not exposed to as vast a range of high-quality literature as they should be. The school should ensure that it promotes the benefits and enjoyment of a wide range of literature so that pupils can further develop their engagement and enjoyment of reading.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148568
<b>DfE registration number</b>	890/6010
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10375143
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	19
<b>Proprietor</b>	Tower Learning Centre Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Kathryn Towers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kim Taylor
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£13,000 to £25,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 290949
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tower-learning.co.uk">www.tower-learning.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@tower-learning.co.uk">admin@tower-learning.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 to 14 July 2022

## Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school operates from premises located at 316 Church Street, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 3QE.
- The school is registered to admit up to 20 pupils. Currently, there are seven pupils on roll. Some of the pupils are dual registered with their mainstream secondary school.
- There were no Year 11 pupils on site during the inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place from 12 to 14 July 2022. Since then, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned a material change inspection to change the school's age range from 14 to 16 years to 13 to 17 years. The material change inspection took place as part of this standard inspection.

## 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of the school, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and honest culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the standards and to provide other inspection evidence. These included the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff or pupils.
- There were very limited responses to Ofsted Parent View. However, the lead inspector spoke to two parents on the telephone.
- As part of their checks on the school's compliance with the standards, inspectors made a tour of the premises, accompanied by the headteacher.

### **The school's proposed change to the age range of pupils**

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is not likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**

### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- The school has started to develop curriculum plans and schemes of work for pupils in Year 9. However, these are in their infancy. For example, they do not specify the important knowledge for pupils to learn or the order that they should learn it.
- The standards in this part are not likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

### **Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- The school has an effective programme to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Pupils' SMSC development is woven throughout the curriculum with plentiful opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain. The school intends for pupils in Year 9 to benefit from similar experiences.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

### **Part 6. Provision of information**

*Paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 32(1)(c)*

- The school has made suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. The school's safeguarding policy is published on its website. The safeguarding arrangements in place at the school pay due regard to current statutory guidance. Staff are well-trained. They are vigilant and identify and

report any safeguarding risks in a timely manner. The school takes swift and effective action when concerns are raised.

- These standards are likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- The proprietor has the knowledge to ensure that the school meets the standards. It is committed to providing a high quality of education for pupils and actively promotes the well-being of pupils. However, the proprietor has not ensured that the curriculum for pupils in Year 9 is developed well enough to meet the requirements in Part 1 should the material change be approved.
- The standards in this part are not likely to be met if the request for the material change is approved.

### **Inspection team**

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cleo Cunningham

Ofsted Inspector



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