

Samuel Laycock School

Ashton Campus, Broadoak Road, Ashton Under Lyne, Tameside, OL6 8RF

Inspection dates

11–12 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the school relocated to its new site in September 2011 there has been an unyielding effort to ensure that all students benefit from the state-of-the-art facilities.
- From extremely low starting points students achieve well and make good progress overall. Students are prepared well for the next stage of their education and all gain qualifications at least in line with their ability.
- Teaching is mainly of good quality. Some teaching is outstanding and very little is less than good. Good teaching across all subjects contributes effectively to the good progress made by students in lessons.
- Students' behaviour is good. Their good attitude to learning in lessons contributes effectively to their good progress. Students feel safe in school and their behaviour around school and also when on educational visits is often exemplary.
- Leaders and managers are effective. They have shaped a school which radiates high expectations in everything it does. The good progress made by students is a direct result of leaders' insistence that every aspect of the new building is used effectively to improve learning.
- Governors know the school well and use this knowledge well to hold leaders to account effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not outstanding. A significant minority of less-able students could reach higher standards. Students who have additional learning needs could make even better progress in lessons.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Not enough is done to ensure that every opportunity is taken to stretch less-able students or to keep those with additional needs interested throughout the lesson.
- Leadership and management of the school are not outstanding. Leaders and governors do not always analyse the high quality information they have about students with sufficient precision to assess the impact of their actions on every student.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 teachers in 14 part-lessons. Two of these were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised students’ work to evaluate the rate of progress over time.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders and members of staff. Meetings were also held with a representative of the local authority and with a group of governors.
- Inspectors spoke to students during lessons and around school. Inspectors held meetings with three groups of students in order to gather their views of the school.
- Information from the scrutiny of a range of documentation provided by the school was used to help form inspection judgements. These documents included the school’s views of how well it is doing, the school development plan, the record of the management of teachers’ performance, assessment information and information relating to safeguarding.
- The views of parents were gathered by talking to parents. In addition, the inspection team considered the views of the 10 parents who completed Parent View (the on-line questionnaire for parents).
- An analysis of 36 responses to the staff questionnaire, along with discussions with staff during the inspection, gave inspectors an insight into the views of staff.
- During the inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Samuel Laycock School moved to its current site in September 2011. The school is now co-located with a large secondary academy.
- At the time of the inspection there were 101 students on roll.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school provides education for students with moderate learning difficulties. About two thirds of students have additional learning needs.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is above average. Pupil premium funding is an additional grant given by the government to school for those children who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from armed forces families and children looked after by the local authority.)
- The school provides a before-school breakfast club which can be accessed by all students.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend alternative education provision with Works4U.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that even more students make better than expected progress by:
 - increasing the frequency and level of challenge for all students, in particular the less able
 - making sure that teaching methods match correctly the needs of all students, in particular those with additional learning needs relating to behaviour and autistic spectrum conditions.
- Leaders should ensure that they use data about students' progress to check that the actions they take to improve performance impact effectively on all groups of students. Leaders should ensure they give a clear indication of what expected and better than expected progress looks like for individual students and use this information to inform their judgements on the impact of their actions.
- The governing body should use information about what expected and better than expected progress will look like for all students, to allow them to investigate more robustly the impact of the school's actions on different groups of pupils, so that all pupils make the best possible progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress, regardless of their starting points. A high proportion of students makes at least the progress expected of them. All students enter the school working at levels well below those expected for their age and in all cases leave Key Stage 4 well-prepared for the next stage in their education. All students leave school to attend further education in local colleges and follow courses appropriate to their needs.
- Last year all Year 11 leavers gained nationally recognised qualifications. Almost every student gained a qualification in both English and Mathematics, with many attaining GCSE pass grades in one or both of these subjects. All students gained ASDAN Award at silver level, which contributed effectively to their successful transition into further education.
- Evidence in students' books along with teachers' records of attainment show that students make consistently good progress in all subjects throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students' social and communication skills develop well throughout their time at the school. Students are encouraged to take on responsibilities, such as through the school council, acting as a disc jockey at lunchtime and being involved in school productions, to build their self-esteem and self-confidence effectively. One parent described how her son had progressed from being reluctant to attend any school to singing in front of the whole school.
- Students are encouraged to read widely and often. Books abound across the school, walls are adorned by students' work and every opportunity is taken in lessons to allow students to read aloud. A recently-introduced reading strategy, which involves students reading every day, is met with enthusiasm by almost all students. The school's records show that the vast majority of students have improved their rate of progress in reading since the introduction of the new strategy. Leaders have already planned to introduce a computer-based system to encourage the more reluctant readers to read more often.
- All groups of students, including those who have additional learning needs and those for whom the school receives pupil premium funds, make good progress and achieve equally well overall. Students eligible for free school meals typically enter Year 7 at levels similar to those of other students in the school, but around five years behind those of their peers in all secondary schools nationally. By the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 4, students known to be eligible for free school meals achieve at least as well as their peers do in the school.
- Students who attend alternative educational provision make good progress. These students have good attendance. The students follow individualised work programmes and as a result, develop the skills they need for the next stage of their education.
- Despite students making expected progress overall, there remain some students, across most groups, who could make even better progress during lessons. A small number of students find it difficult to understand or concentrate on instructions, due to their individual learning needs or their low ability levels. This often results in a small amount of learning time being lost for these students. Consequently, progress is less than it could be for a small number of students.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's motto of 'Happiness first – all else follows' rings true throughout the school and in every lesson. As a result, students enjoy their time at the school and there is no doubt of their willingness to work hard and improve. From the moment they arrive, students are smiling, wanting to talk and in eager anticipation of the school day. This is a direct result of the positive relationships between staff and students.
- Teaching is lively and interesting and encourages students to be fully involved in their learning. In art and design, for example, students were observed enthusiastically designing their own camouflage collage and making a frame for their embroidery. In physical education (PE), students make use of instant video clips in order to improve their curling technique. In a less

practical lesson, adults were observed questioning students skilfully so that they arrived at their own conclusion of the differences between two types of castle. As a result, students are attentive in lessons and make good progress across all subjects.

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used extensively and effectively throughout the school as a means of supporting learning. Students are introduced to technology at every opportunity and this contributes effectively to improving their understanding and also often their communication skills. In a science lesson, students were observed using a computer to make a presentation about how to 'insulate the home'. Students held small-group discussions and without exception then went on to add new information to their own presentation.
- Literacy is a key component of the curriculum. Students are encouraged to write freely in all lessons and there is an expectation that students will present work to the best of their ability. Students have pride in their work and are eager to read to adults and show off their accomplishments. Evidence in students' books shows that their writing improves greatly over time, both in terms of presentation and quality.
- Learning outside the classroom and beyond the school grounds is held in the same high esteem as learning in the classroom. Learning activities beyond the classroom are well planned and lead to a vast range of experiences contributing to the good progress made by students. Year 11 students, for example, take part the WoW (World of Work) programme, they attend a local college, get involved in local community and environmental schemes and even raise money for a local hospice. This expansive range of curricular activities, offered throughout the school, contributes effectively, not only to the development of students' social and communication skills, but also to the broadening of students' understanding and experience of the world around them.
- Teachers skilfully and accurately assess the progress being made by students, both in lessons and over longer periods of time. If it is felt that students are not making the progress they should then changes are made and different approaches applied. Similarly, new approaches are constantly being sought as a means of making learning even more inspiring.
- Although expectations of students are high, on rare occasions opportunities are missed to ensure that students of all abilities and learning needs are involved effectively in learning. In a small proportion of lessons, a few students do not fully understand what they need to do next, they sometimes lose interest and on occasion, become distracted. Consequently, a small number of students, particularly those with low ability and those with additional needs related to their behaviour or autistic spectrum condition, could make even better progress than they do.
- Parents spoken to by inspectors could not praise enough the work done by the school to ensure that their children are ready for the next phase of their education. Parents feel that their children are safe in school, but above all, that staff know their children extremely well. Staff are prepared to 'go the extra mile' to meet the needs of students and, as a result, students always want to come to school. Without exception, parents feel that their children have developed academically and grown in self-confidence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. The attitude of students to learning is good and only very rarely do students become disengaged. In a small number of lessons students either do not understand the purpose of an activity or do not understand the instructions given to them. This sometimes results in a small number of students becoming distracted and missing opportunities to learn.
- Students of all ages have a high degree of pride in their own work and in their school. All students spoken to were keen to tell inspectors how well they were doing in school and that school was a 'fantastic' place to be. Students of all abilities gave accounts of how adults had helped them improve and of opportunities they have to sample new experiences.
- Behaviour management is good. Most staff use their expert knowledge of individual students' needs in dealing with minor issues early and effectively. For example, a teaching assistant was observed quickly calming a Year 7 student so that he could continue to take part in the art and

design lesson. Most students respond well to a behaviour record sheet, which is closely linked to individual behaviour targets.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in school. Parents spoken to, along with those who responded to the on-line questionnaire, believe students are safe in school. The school site is secure and entry to the school is managed effectively. Facilities for students outside the building have been well thought out and give a good balance between keeping students safe and allowing freedom to become involved in physically-demanding activities. All staff have been trained in child protection procedures and in safe behaviour management techniques. An appropriate number of staff has been trained in specific medical conditions and in general first aid.
- Bullying is rare in school, because leaders take effective action to deal with minor issues quickly and appropriately. Students know what constitutes bullying and this understanding is reinforced by visits from the local police to talk to students about bullying, a whole school anti-bullying week and special lessons on cyber-bullying. Students are less aware of some other forms of bullying, such as homophobic bullying and the use of words such as 'gay' as an insulting term. Students spoken to said that although there was some name-calling and falling out, bullying gets sorted out quickly by staff.
- School records show that the number of serious incidents is low. However, comprehensive records kept on a lesson-by-lesson and a daily basis show that minor incidents are being dealt with frequently by adults. This is a reflection of the changing needs of the students who attend the school and is being monitored closely by leaders.
- The school's curriculum makes an effective contribution to improving students' behaviour and attitudes. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that the experience of students is as broad as possible. Students take part in a vast array of activities, both in school and out of school, including sporting events, dance competitions and visits to religious centres. These not only contribute effectively to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but also allow students to practise their good behaviour in a public arena.
- The school's own data show that attendance has improved from being in the bottom ten per cent of secondary school nationally to average. Leaders have taken effective action to improve attendance. A well thought out strategy, including the employment of a family liaison officer, rewards for high attendance and first day of absence contact with home, has proved effective in raising attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Samuel Laycock School is led and managed well by a headteacher who has taken the school through the difficult time following a change of site. The headteacher is supported effectively by the senior leadership team and, together with a united staff, they have created an exceptional ethos based on care for the students and a commitment to continued improvement.
- Leadership is not outstanding because, despite leaders having an accurate understanding of how well students are making progress overall, they do not check rigorously the impact of their actions on the progress of different groups of students. Leaders are aware of the need to use their exceptional knowledge and understanding of the levels at which students are working when they enter the school. Leaders plan to use this information to build an accurate picture of what good and outstanding progress will look like for every student.
- Although the move into the new building along with the inevitable teething problems has consumed much of leaders' time, there is a continued focus on improving teaching and learning. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching assiduously and have ensured that the performance management of teachers is closely linked to the school improvement plan. Leaders plan to be more specific about what expected and better than expected progress will look like for individual students and to use this information to judge the quality of teaching accurately.
- Continued improvements in the curriculum play a major part in building a learning environment which fosters a love of learning. The combination of state-of-the art information technology and

a policy of encouraging the development of literacy skills in all subject areas have led to at least good progress in the literacy and communication skills of students. This creativity and a willingness of leaders to encourage teachers continuously to adapt their practice are effective in making learning interesting and relevant.

- Leaders have made effective use of pupil premium funding. The employment of two additional teaching assistants, along with the expansion of after-school clubs, additional life skills sessions and increased family support have ensured that disadvantaged students achieve at least as well as their peers in school do.
- Leaders are effective in promoting equality within the school. Leaders listen to the views of students and this plays an integral part in the development and running of the school. Students are taught to value differences, both physically and in opinion. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded in the ethos of the school. Consequently, Samuel Laycock School is an inclusive school.
- The school makes effective arrangements for the safeguarding of all of its students.
- The local authority has not provided effective support and challenge to help the school improve in recent years. This has largely been due to a lack of capacity on the part of the local authority. As a result, new leaders and governors have been left to find support for themselves and have not been challenged to analyse rigorously the impact of their actions on the progress of individual and groups of students.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is good. Governors have a clear vision for the school and this is shared at all levels. Governors know the school well, because many of them are able to spend time in the school attending events and even taking part in a 'Governor Week' during which they attend school for focussed observations of the its work. Records of governors' meetings show that governors are effective in managing the school's finances and have a good understanding of how pupil premium money is spent. However, questioning about the progress of students or the impact of spending on achievement is not rigorous enough, because it does not use information about what expected progress should look like.
 - A robust performance management system has been put in place and as a result, governors are in a good position to hold teachers to account for their performance. Governors are aware that this system needs to be strengthened through the use of more detailed information about the progress of pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106280
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	441204

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Charters
Headteacher	Carol Lund
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2010
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