

Landgate School, Bryn

Landgate Lane, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN4 0EP

Inspection dates

29-30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and head of school have transformed Landgate into a successful school of which parents, staff and pupils are proud to be part.
- Leaders are not prepared to accept second best. They have worked tirelessly to eradicate the legacy of underperformance. They have the full support of their staff.
- Pupils look forward to coming to school. They feel safe and enjoy their learning. The smiles on their faces and warm welcome they give to staff in the morning confirm this.
- Children get off to a flying start in early years. Excellent relationships help children settle in quickly when they join. Parents are delighted with the wealth of information they receive about their child's learning.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are strengths of the school. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other, as well as to adults. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils make good progress across the curriculum. The different groups including the disadvantaged, most able and girls achieve equally well.

- Teachers plan lessons that engage and enthuse pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together, making good use of lesson time.
- Leaders make sure that they have accurate, up-to-date information about pupils' performance. They ensure that pupils are on track to meet their ambitious targets.
- Effective middle leaders make a strong contribution to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school is a hive of activity. Good use of the local amenities, speech and music therapy sessions, as well as trips and visits further afield broaden pupils' learning experiences. These activities make a positive difference to pupils' social and communication skills.
- The provision for 16 to 19 study has rapidly improved. Students are developing key employability and study skills which enable them to successfully move on to a higher level of education, employment or training.
- Governors acknowledge that they did not know the school well enough. They discharge their duties more diligently now, so that previous shortcomings are resolved.



Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase governors' capacity to improve the performance of the school by:
 - making sure governors continue to discharge their statutory duties diligently, including compliance with the requirements for the publication of information
 - providing regular and high-quality training for all governors so that they are all better prepared to hold the school robustly to account
 - embedding the programme of visits to school to gain a deeper understanding of how the school is implementing governors' policies and improvement plans and how well they are working in practice
 - establishing processes for regular self-evaluation, review and improvement of the work of the governors.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- The executive headteacher and head of school have breathed new life into Landgate. Since their appointments, they have taken this school from strength to strength. Staff, pupils and parents are proud to be a part of this thriving learning community.
- From their very first days, the senior leaders, ably supported by the assistant headteachers, have rolled their sleeves up and set about rapidly improving every aspect of this school. They clearly communicate their high expectations to everyone and provide excellent role models for staff and pupils.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. They have left no stone unturned as they have evaluated the work of the school. This attention to detail has paid dividends. The rapidly improving outcomes for pupils testify to the success of the leaders' approach.
- Staff are energised and enthused by their leaders. They enjoy working alongside colleagues from other schools, attending training courses and collaborating with their peers at Landgate. Staff share leaders' vision to 'aim high and reach all' for the school and play their part in making this dream a reality.
- Middle leaders are passionate about their subjects. They zealously analyse the information about pupils' attainment and progress, scrutinise pupils' work and evaluate the quality of teaching in their subject. With the support of leaders, they have developed the skills, knowledge and expertise to develop their subjects well. Middle leaders work together to make sure that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils, conforms to statutory requirements and is enhanced by the interests and enthusiasm of teachers.
- Leaders have implemented a robust approach to performance management. As with everything else that leaders do, the process is well considered, fair and transparent. As a consequence, not only has the quality of teaching dramatically improved, but also staff attendance is now good and morale is high.
- Leaders have harnessed the strengths of the team well. Senior leaders have collaborated in the development of the school's assessment system. This system provides everyone with easily accessible, up-to-date information about the attainment and progress of every pupil. Leaders use the information well. They quickly identify any pupil falling behind so that support can be put in place to help them catch up quickly. Leaders also identify emerging patterns and trends so that they can put pre-emptive measures in place.
- Staff have high aspirations and expectations for pupils. The school uses the information they gather about every pupil, at whatever point they join the school, to start planning for that pupil's future. The introduction of 'learning ladders' in primary, and 'flight paths' in secondary, tracks each pupil's progress against an aspirational trajectory through school, so that they can realise their full potential.
- Leaders have rapidly improved the curriculum offered to older pupils and students. They can study a combination of academic and vocational subjects. The school provides careers guidance and a range of work-related learning activities for pupils and



students, preparing them well for their next steps.

- Leaders make good use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch up, special educational needs and primary physical education and sports. Leaders identify pupils' barriers to learning and consider carefully how to make best use of the additional funding to boost pupils' achievement. For example, leaders have arranged play therapy and additional swimming lessons for younger pupils. As a result, this funding makes a positive difference to the achievement of those pupils who are eligible.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils enjoy listening to music as well as performing themselves. There are a wealth of opportunities for pupils to meet different people through events in school as well as community events. Older pupils work in food banks, cafes and supermarkets, learning to work with people from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Pupils gain an understanding of British values as part of the curriculum, as well as through real-life events, such as casting their votes in the elections for the Wigan Youth Parliament and making a presentation to the Wigan Governors' Forum.
- Responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, included a minority of respondents who were dissatisfied with key aspects of the school's work. Parents who spoke to inspectors wrote comments as part of the online survey and have responded to the wide range of recent surveys conducted by the school. They are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. These parents applaud the 'change for the better', feel staff listen to them and are impressed by the progress made by their children.
- In the early days following the last inspection, the school received high levels of support from Oakfield High School. This external support helped leaders and staff to rapidly improve the quality of provision at Landgate.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is passionate about the school, its staff and pupils. However, governors acknowledge they did not know the school well enough. Governors previously have been overly reliant on the information provided by senior and middle leaders to find out about the school's performance.
- Governors attend local authority training, but do not always feel it is relevant to their needs. In the past, governors have not made good enough use of the plethora of highquality support which is available to boards from other providers to overcome this problem.
- Governors have not kept up to date with their duties in relation to the publication of information, but as soon as this was pointed out by inspectors, this oversight was swiftly rectified.
- Convincing evidence presented to inspectors showed that governors are aware of their previous shortcomings and have put in place improved systems of governance. Consequently, governors have the capacity to provide effective support and challenge.



Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders have established a culture of vigilance. They have ensured that all staff are well trained so that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Leaders leave nothing to chance.
- Since the last inspection, meticulous procedures for managing pupils' arrivals and departures have been put in place so that pupils are kept safe. The staff responsible for safeguarding make sure that record keeping is thorough. Staff are attuned to the additional vulnerabilities for pupils in this school. They ensure that relevant policies and procedures reflect this and take every opportunity to teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe. Parents and staff use the daily log books and regular phone calls to keep in touch. Staff and parents are confident to report any concerns and these are robustly followed up by leaders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan lively, engaging lessons which address pupils' next steps in learning. They make sure that lessons proceed at a brisk pace so that they maintain pupils' interest and engagement.
- Teachers use their accurate and comprehensive assessments of pupils' learning well, so that they prepare lessons which help pupils achieve success. Moreover, teachers make good use of the information they glean about pupils' learning in each lesson to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and pick up on any misconceptions.
- Teachers are making sure that they find opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. Recent training by the teacher in charge of mathematics has given other staff greater confidence to teach mathematics as part of their subjects.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together. While the ratio of adults to pupils is high, staff make sure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to work independently as well as with their classmates, when appropriate.
- Established routines, carefully considered learning environments and well-managed transitions mean that pupils feel safe. However, when pupils become anxious, staff are adept at calming them down and quickly re-engaging them in learning. Consequently, lessons proceed without interruption and pupils make good progress.
- Leaders recognise the important role that subject specialist teachers play and so make good use of teachers' expertise. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils means that pupils achieve well across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan well for the most able pupils. They provide challenging and purposeful learning activities which make sure that pupils have to think hard. Pupils enjoy grappling with the tricky problems their teachers set them.
- High-quality phonics teaching is helping the youngest pupils get off to a good start. More of these pupils are acquiring early reading skills than previously. The more able readers read with fluency and confidence. These pupils are able to talk about the books they like to read. Leaders' insistence on the teaching of literacy across the



curriculum is helping all pupils to more rapidly improve their reading and writing skills.

Leaders have correctly identified that pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to develop their reading comprehension skills and enhance the effectiveness of what they write. They have set out a credible plan to address these weaknesses, which is starting to make a positive difference.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are keen and eager to learn. From the moment pupils arrive at school, they embrace every activity with gusto. They take pride in their work and are delighted by teachers' recognition of their efforts and success. Teachers make sure that no time is wasted, as pupils move quickly from one task to the next.
- Teachers provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to prepare for their next steps, while at the same time contributing to the school community. During the inspection, a group of key stage 4 pupils were providing assistance with technical issues, as part of their computing lesson. Pupils set about resolving the array of problems which staff had alerted them to. After each task, pupils completed a report for each member of staff, explaining the actions they had taken and whether the problem had been solved. Pupils worked well together, sharing ideas and collaborating on their reports.
- Pupils show respect for each other's differences. Despite the complex needs of some of the pupils, everyone is tolerant of each other. Staff make sure that all pupils have lots of opportunities to take part in activities outside school, meeting different people and dealing with the hustle and bustle of the world they live in.
- Leaders have created an open and transparent culture where staff and parents feel confident to share ideas and raise concerns. Leaders regularly survey parents to solicit their views about different aspects of the school's work. Leaders also provide pupils with opportunities to share their views through surveys as well as the regular school council meetings.
- Every class gets fully involved in the school's annual 'Business Enterprise Week'. Each class allocates job roles, designs and makes a product, puts together a marketing strategy and sells their product at an event attended by parents and members of the community. This is one of many opportunities created by staff to hone pupils' social and communication skills in real-life situations.
- Staff are well attuned to the vulnerabilities of pupils with autism spectrum disorder. They make sure that they complement the planned curriculum activities with regular informal reminders to pupils about how to minimise potential risks to their personal safety. Pupils understand that they must not share information about themselves online and know the rules for safely crossing the road.
- Leaders have recently introduced a 'Golden Table Award' to recognise pupils' achievements in relation to healthy eating. For example, staff can nominate pupils who have tasted a new food or use their knife and fork if they usually find this difficult. Breakfast and lunchtimes provide opportunities for pupils to socialise. Staff encourage



pupils to increase their independence through pupils taking responsibility for clearing away after these meals.

Staff make sure that pupils maintain active lifestyles. Pupils enjoy their regular swimming lessons as well as rebound therapy. Many students take part in the afterschool clubs, for example football training provided by Wigan Athletic Football Club. Younger pupils make good use of the climbing frame, bicycles and other toys at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Teachers' high expectations for pupils' behaviour have had a dramatic effect on pupils' conduct. Well-established routines, high-quality teaching and excellent relationships help pupils to manage their own behaviour well. New pupils quickly become familiar with and abide by the school's 'Respect Charter'. The school is calm and orderly and incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They show great respect towards staff, visitors and each other. They listen carefully to their teachers, take turns and are quick to follow instructions. Older pupils take pride in setting a good example for younger pupils, walking sensibly around school, using excellent table manners in the dining room and getting on well together in the playground.
- Pupils' improved attendance reflects their enthusiasm for school. When pupils arrive in the morning, they greet the staff enthusiastically and quickly settle in their classes, ready to learn. The pastoral managers provide effective support to the very small number of families who struggle to get their children to school. The pastoral managers work well with other agencies so that pupils and their families get the help they need.

Outcomes for pupils

- Pupils join the school at different ages. Many have experienced disruption to their education prior to joining the school. Almost all pupils are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils join the school with attainment well below that typical for their age.
- The improvements leaders have put in place are making a positive difference to pupils' attainment and progress. From their different starting points, the overwhelming majority of pupils make good progress, across almost all subjects, including English and mathematics. For older pupils, this good progress is helping them to overcome the legacy of underperformance highlighted at the last inspection.
- Teachers, quite rightly, prioritise securing pupils' readiness for learning. The school's consistent approach to behaviour management coupled with the excellent role models of existing pupils help new pupils quickly acquire positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, new pupils get off to a good start.
- Pupils' good progress is underpinned by their rapid acquisition of social and verbal communication skills. Teachers and support staff make sure no opportunity is missed



to encourage pupils to develop these skills.

- Pupils in key stage 1 build on the good start they make in early years. Teachers make sure pupils across key stages 1 and 2 continue to have opportunities to develop the broad range of knowledge and skills to embark on the national curriculum. Consequently, almost all primary pupils are achieving the ambitious targets set and making progress in reading, writing and mathematics broadly in line with pupils from similar starting points.
- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are making consistently good progress across all subjects. Leaders' insistence on pupils following programmes of study leading to recognised qualifications at key stage 4 means that pupils can consider a wide range of options at the end of Year 11. Staff make sure that pupils develop their personal, social and employability skills as well as securing academic qualifications to ensure that they are well prepared for the demands of key stage 5.
- Leaders' 'flight paths' for every secondary pupil are helping them to make sure every pupil is following the most appropriate course to reach their full potential. The frequent reviews of pupils' progress mean that there is no ceiling put on what pupils are capable of. As a result, Landgate is no longer the final destination for pupils. A number of pupils have successfully moved on to other schools to study for GCSE qualifications.
- Transitions are exceptionally well managed. School records confirm that pupils who have moved on to post-16 destinations have successfully sustained their placements as a result of the school's meticulous transition programme.
- Subject leaders have kept a close eye on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, making sure that the additional funding is used to good effect. Consequently, these pupils achieve as well as their peers, at all phases and across all subjects.
- It is early days in the school's assessment and tracking system as leaders have not previously tracked the attainment and progress of all the different groups of pupils. Although there has been no scrutiny of the performance of the most able pupils and girls as identified groups, individual achievement information, work in their books and observations of teaching strongly indicate that they are performing well.

Early years provision

- The teacher in charge has revitalised the early years. She has set about improving every aspect of the provision. She makes sure that children in early years now get off to a flying start. Parents are delighted how well their children have settled and the good progress their children have made in just a few weeks.
- The teacher in charge uses her secure knowledge of early years and robust understanding of the needs of children well, to plan activities which engage and enthuse the children. Children look forward to coming to school, play and work happily together and are keen to please their teacher.
- The teacher has a deep understanding of the children's individual needs and makes sure that she provides the additional support children need to achieve success. The teacher maintains regular contact with parents so that any concerns can be dealt with quickly. The teacher makes sure statutory welfare requirements are met. Children are



exceptionally well cared for.

- The teacher has high expectations for the children. She encourages them to learn to do things for themselves, such as dressing and undressing for swimming and feeding themselves. She works closely with specialist staff, including speech and language and occupational therapists, to help children overcome their barriers to learning.
- Leaders encourage the early years staff to develop their skills and knowledge through a range of training opportunities. The early years lead has worked well with colleagues from other schools to ensure that assessments of children's learning are accurate.
- Phonics is well taught. Children enjoy the fun activities to help them develop their early reading and writing skills. Good modelling by the teacher, a brisk pace during the lessons and lots of opportunities for children to consolidate their learning are helping children to achieve success.
- Although children now make strong progress from their different starting points, leaders recognise the importance of helping these young children to catch up quickly to the levels of development expected for their age. Leaders set challenging targets, carefully track the progress children make and monitor how quickly they are catching up. As a result of these raised expectations and improvements in the provision, children are now much better prepared for the transition to key stage 1.
- Recently the teacher has introduced an online learning journal to record, track and celebrate children's progress. Staff are using this well to capture children's learning and assess their progress. However, staff recognise that to further accelerate pupils' progress the information they gather through the learning journal must inform planning of the next steps for the child. This would not only inform the staff to help their planning in the setting but also enable parents to help children with their learning at home.
- The early years teacher has worked hard to improve the indoor and outdoor areas. She recognises that further work needs to be done to make better use of the outdoor area and promote reading, writing and mathematics in all of the areas.

16 to 19 study programmes

- Leaders are quite rightly proud of the improvements they have made to post-16 provision. They have made sure that all students can now achieve the qualifications relevant to their career ambitions.
- Despite the key stage 5 base being co-located with key stages 3 and 4, the provision reflects the increased maturity of these students. Staff ensure that these students are given greater independence. Relationships between students and staff are less formal and a significant proportion of learning takes place beyond the school gates, in preparation for their next steps.
- Relationships between students as well as between students and staff are excellent. Students support each other, celebrating success and overcoming challenges. Students show great respect for each other and their teachers. They listen attentively to instructions, pay heed to advice and work hard. Staff provide excellent role models for these young adults, encouraging them to develop social and communication skills



which will stand them in good stead for further education and the world of work.

- Staff support students and their families to prepare for their next steps. They make sure that students are given plenty of experiences to help them make well-considered choices about their future plans. Staff build students' resilience to deal with the challenges that will face them when they move on from Landgate.
- Since the implementation of the new 16 to 19 curriculum in September 2015, the first group of students have successfully progressed to further education. These students all successfully gained the necessary qualifications to secure places at specialist colleges, community interest companies and a specialist post-19 training provider. Some of the current Year 14 students have already submitted their applications for further education colleges and are eagerly awaiting the outcome. This culture change from one of fear and trepidation about the future to excitement is a credit to the hard work of the staff.
- Students look forward to work experience placements. The member of staff in charge carefully tailors each placement to the needs and aspirations of the student. Students are encouraged to immerse themselves in the placements, relinquishing the support of school staff.
- The school offers a comprehensive programme to help students develop key skills for independent living, including road safety, budgeting, shopping, cooking, healthy living and independent travel. As a result, students are well prepared for their transition from school to adult life.
- In 2016, after only 12 months, all students achieved a minimum of 11 entry-level units. Current students are making strong progress and are on track to achieve at least an entry-level qualification in all curriculum subjects. Some students are also working towards a Level 1 award in floristry. All students are working towards entry-level functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. The school makes sure that the most able students are working towards entry-level 2 and 3 qualifications.
- Students make a significant contribution to the life of the school. They set an excellent example to younger pupils through their exemplary behaviour and good attendance. They take a lead role in whole-school fundraising events such as Jeans for Genes, Macmillan Coffee Mornings and Children in Need.
- The high-quality provision offered by the school for post-16 students makes sure that retention and attendance rates are exceptionally high.



School details

Unique reference number	134297
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10019819

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Brown
Headteacher	Catherine Taylor (Executive Headteacher) Kathy Claxton (Head of School)
Telephone number	01942 776688
Website	www.landgateschool.co.uk
Email address	landgate@wiganmbc.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Many of the pupils have associated communication and behaviour difficulties. All pupils have an educational, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils join the school at different ages.
- The school formally federated with Oakfield High School in September 2015. The two schools are partners in The Aspire Federation. The federation is led by an executive headteacher. Each school is separately managed by a head of school.
- The governing body was reconstituted following the merger of the two schools'



governing bodies as part of the federation. Three former governors from the Landgate School governing body now sit on the governing body for The Aspire Federation.

- The head of school took up post in January 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- There are many more boys than girls on the roll.
- The school did not meet requirements on the publication of information about governance, special educational needs, curriculum, admissions and performance data on its website. However, the school took swift action to rectify the shortcomings by the end of the inspection.



Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, including a joint learning walk with a senior leader.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, other members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning and assessment information.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime and lunch. Inspectors considered the results of the school's own survey of pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read and checked a range of pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection, considered the 55 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and the school's own surveys of parents.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of staff and also considered the 46 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector



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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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