

Inspection of Lavender Field School

Samuel Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 3AE

Inspection dates: 29 June–1 July 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

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 become independent, happy and valuable members of society because leaders have high expectations of them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) catch up after previously negative experiences of education. Pupils show high levels of respect and kindness towards adults. Parents and carers see how much their children's happiness and well-being improve.

Pupils try hard in their learning. They move confidently to learning activities without prompting, and support each other to concentrate. Pupils understand the behaviour system and enjoy the rewards in place. Pupils manage their behaviour well. This is because they are well-supported by staff. Pupils who spoke with us said they feel safe in school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Those who spoke with us said any falling-out or any bullying is dealt with quickly.

Pupils enrich their learning through the wide range of opportunities they are given by leaders and staff. Pupils take part in the clubs provided during the school day. They all benefit from being part of the school council, so they feel listened to and valued. Pupils take part in activities to raise money for charities, to think about the environment and consider their impact on the world.

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

Curriculum plans map out how pupils' subject knowledge and skills will be developed in a logical order. Staff provide learning activities which develop pupils' basic skills, including mathematical skills, across the curriculum. For example, older pupils design a menu for a meal, budget for how much the ingredients will cost and cook the meal for their classmates.

Leaders and staff identify any gaps in pupils' learning and use this information to plan an effective curriculum which suits the needs of pupils. Pupils build on prior learning and remember more of what they learn. This curriculum, along with highly effective social and emotional support, helps pupils to re-engage with education. As a result, pupils achieve well.

The well-planned curriculum means that pupils are making progress in all subjects. Staff deliver the curriculum in creative ways to interest pupils. Specialist teachers teach some subjects such as physical education (PE) and science. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education curriculum are similarly well-planned. Learning these subjects enables pupils to understand the importance of healthy relationships and keeping safe. Leaders also plan carefully how to prepare pupils for life after school. For example, one room has a layout similar to a small flat so that older pupils can experience what it may be like to live independently in this environment.

Leaders place high importance on pupils' reading and communication skills. Pupils in all key stages read regularly. This builds on pupils' understanding of letters and

sounds. Staff provide effective support for pupils who are at differing stages in learning to read. Pupils talk about the books they have read and enjoy the libraries in class. They develop a love of reading. These strategies have contributed to many pupils becoming fluent and confident readers.

Staff are confident in delivering the curriculum and know where to access support. However, they have not received training in all areas of the curriculum. This means pupils' knowledge is not deepened as much as it could be.

Staff's high aspirations for pupils helps them to become more positive about their futures. Careers education, information, advice and guidance are in place to help pupils know about the different opportunities that are available. Leaders are currently refining this support as pupils now move from key stage 3 to key stage 4.

Staff provide many opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development which promote their sense of equality of opportunity for all. For example, pupils learn about religions and beliefs as well as understanding sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Adults' strong pastoral support helps pupils to develop into successful learners. Staff are able to adapt their support to meet pupils' social and emotional needs. Staff from the therapy team help pupils to regulate their emotions and social anxieties through individual support or group work. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They concentrate on their learning in the calm and supportive atmosphere.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional experiences such as horse riding and yoga. Such experiences enrich their learning and help to develop perseverance and reliance.

The headteacher has created a climate where all staff and pupils are cared for and feel valued. The staff show dedication and passion for what they do. Leaders work closely with the local authority. Leaders provide the necessary information in regard to provision for pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

The proprietors and 'critical friends' contribute to the leadership of the school very effectively. The proprietors have established clear lines of accountability. They have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and where further developments could be made. This support and challenge have contributed to the strong start the school has made since it opened.

The proprietors have also ensured that the independent school standards are securely and consistently met. For example, the proprietors ensure that detailed risk assessments of the premises and all activities are carried out. They also ensure that the welfare of pupils is always considered. Leaders have ensured that the school has an accessibility plan that complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding practices, policies and procedures are secure. Staff knowledge of how to keep pupils safe is exceptionally strong. They follow the school's guidance at all times. Leaders have systems in place to ensure that data is collected, analysed and acted on in the case of any perceived sexual harassment or online sexual abuse. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents and carers via the school's website.

Staff have a precise understanding of all pupils' vulnerabilities and respond rapidly to their changing emotions and needs. This means pupils are kept as safe as possible. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations, including when using the internet. This work helps to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of keeping themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some staff have not received training in all subjects. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders give staff the necessary subject-specific knowledge to deliver the curriculum in all key stages. This will ensure that pupils will build up subject knowledge and skills, and prepare them well for their next stage of education or training.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 | 147896 |
| DfE registration number | 895/6016 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 10193357 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 45 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Sarah Deaville and Amy Hopkin |
| Chair | Sarah Deaville |
| Headteacher | Tania Beales |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £45,500–£73,500 |
| Telephone number | 07970 900529 |
| Website | www.lavenderfieldschool.co.uk |
| Email address | tbeales@lavenderfieldschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection of the school. The school was registered by the Department of Education on 28 July 2020.
- The school caters for up to 50 mixed-gender pupils aged five to 19 years, in Crewe. The school is an independent special school that caters for pupils with SEND, of which some will be children looked after by the local authority.
- The school provides for pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs, autism spectrum disorder and/or cognitive and learning difficulties. All pupils have an EHC Plan
- The directors are also directors of three other registered independent schools.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection there were no pupils in key stage 4 or 5.

Information about this inspection

We 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 (coronavirus) pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

- We carried out deep dives in early reading, PE, science and PSHE. We held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. We also talked to pupils about their learning, and scrutinised their work.
- In addition, we considered other subjects as part of this inspection. We held discussions with the subject leaders, sampled work and talked to pupils.
- We met with senior leaders and the group designated safeguarding lead and reviewed documentation related to safeguarding.
- We met with the proprietor, the 'critical friends' group, curriculum leads, the executive headteachers, and the special educational needs coordinator. We reviewed a range of documentation including that related to the school's self-evaluation.
- We talked to staff and pupils. We analysed the four responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and three free-texts from parents. In addition, we talked to three parents informally by telephone.

- We also considered the 23 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Adam Sproston

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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