

Inspection of Lancaster Steiner School

Lune Road, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 5QU

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this happy and nurturing school. They describe learning as fun. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have to learn outdoors. Those pupils new to the school make friends very quickly. They are warmly welcomed and soon feel part of the school family.

Leaders are determined that every pupil will achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils learn how to be resilient, resourceful and imaginative learners. However, in some subjects, pupils do not learn what they need to build and deepen their subject knowledge.

Pupils try their best. They are keen to join in classroom discussions and share their ideas. They behave well in class and around school.

Many of the school's attractive resources are carefully crafted by pupils. For example, pupils make beautiful calendars, bean bags and pencil rolls. Pupils take great pride in their intricate handcraft.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They trust their teachers and know that they will listen to any concerns or worries. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen at the school. If any incident should occur, pupils know that adults will take the right steps to deal with it.

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

Leaders have planned an exciting and well-balanced curriculum which pupils enjoy. Across different subjects, leaders have identified the most important knowledge they intend pupils to learn and remember. In some subjects, such as English and science, the curriculum has been carefully planned so that pupils build on and deepen their knowledge as they move through the school. However, the ordering of the curriculum is not as clear or logical in other subjects. This means that pupils do not learn and remember as much knowledge as they could.

Leaders are in the process of improving some curriculum plans, including in the early years. These changes are at varied stages of implementation across subjects. The changes being made are starting to improve the ordering of the curriculum.

Subject leaders have not benefited from recent training in some subjects. Intended training for staff has been interrupted by the pandemic. This means that some staff have limited expertise in checking that the improvements in the curriculum are improving pupils' learning.

In lessons, teachers check regularly on pupils' learning. Teachers use this information to give pupils extra practice if needed. Leaders are developing systems to check precisely how well pupils are remembering their learning over time.

From the time they start in the early years, children are fully immersed in listening to and enjoying stories. Teachers share and discuss different books and traditional tales with their classes each day. Teachers make sure that pupils practise their early reading skills regularly, using reading books that match pupils' reading knowledge. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books and novels and develop a love of reading. Pupils, including those with SEND, leave the school as confident, fluent readers.

In mathematics, pupils learn important number facts, including multiplication tables. They develop confidence and accuracy when calculating. However, the teaching of mathematics does not always build on what pupils already know. This means that pupils sometimes struggle to tackle the mathematical challenges they are given.

Leaders work very closely with professionals, parents and carers to identify any pupils with SEND. Staff ensure that these pupils receive the right support to help them learn. For example, staff teach pupils with SEND to be successful in managing their own emotional needs when required. This helps these pupils to keep up with learning alongside their friends.

The curriculum provides many positive opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils develop a detailed knowledge and curiosity about the natural world around them. Through nature walks, and visits to farms and nature reserves, they learn about plants, wildlife and the changing seasons. Pupils are fully involved in tending the school's allotment, growing a variety of fruit and vegetables.

Leaders place a high emphasis on supporting pupils' well-being. For example, pupils learn a range of useful strategies to help them relax, such as mindfulness colouring and deep breathing.

Pupils learn to value differences, such as race and ethnicity. One pupil said, 'If we were all the same, it would be boring.' However, pupils' learning about different cultures and religions is not carefully planned or broad. This means that pupils leave the school with limited knowledge of world religions or cultures beyond Europe.

From the early years, children learn to work cooperatively. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. They are quick to follow instructions from adults. This means that everyone can get on with their learning.

The school's trustees bring a range of expertise to their roles. They enhance their skills through regular training, such as in safeguarding. Trustees keep a careful check on how well the curriculum improvements being made are meeting the needs of pupils, including those with SEND.

The board of trustees has a detailed awareness of the independent school standards (the standards), including compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and other statutory duties. The school's premises are attractive, spacious and well equipped. Classrooms are well decorated and resourced. There is an attractive, enclosed outdoor learning

area for pupils to learn and play in. Detailed information about the school is available on the school website. This includes a suitable safeguarding policy.

Leaders take care to manage the workload of staff. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported by leaders. They appreciate the efforts that leaders make to support staff well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check the staff recruited to work in school to ensure they pose no threat to pupils.

Leaders make sure that staff have very regular safeguarding training. This helps staff to be alert to any signs of possible abuse or neglect. When needed, leaders work closely with parents and external professionals to provide help and support for pupils who are at risk.

The curriculum helps pupils develop their understanding of risk. For example, pupils learn how to use the internet safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Pupils do not benefit from well-sequenced plans in all subjects. This has led to pupils forgetting some important learning and not achieving as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that the new curriculum plans are clearly sequenced to enable pupils to build their knowledge and skills towards agreed end points.
- In most subjects, subject leaders have not benefited from recent training. This means that subject leaders lack some expertise in monitoring the impact of ongoing improvements to the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure that curriculum improvements have the required impact in improving pupils' achievements.
- The curriculum does not fully develop pupils' understanding of different cultures and religions. This means that pupils leave the school without a secure understanding of the different cultures and faiths they may encounter in their lives. Leaders should ensure that pupils improve their knowledge of a range of cultures and religions.

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

Unique reference number	132095
DfE registration number	888/6040
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10193338
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Lancaster Steiner School
Chair	Nina Moeller
Headteacher	Kathryn Flasby
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,225 to £6,350
Telephone number	01524 381 876
Website	https://lancastersteinerschool.org
Email address	enquiries@lancastersteinerschool.org

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors held meetings with the leaders, trustees and staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and school life.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics, science and French. In these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors looked at other subjects in less depth, such as craft, history and geography. In these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation, which included minutes of trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the nine responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the nine free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the nine responses to the staff questionnaire and the 18 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that around the standards. Inspectors looked at arrangements for safeguarding. They spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors reviewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors met with the school leaders and pupils to discuss provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with the leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and attendance. Inspectors looked at documentation associated with these areas.

- Inspectors visited the early years provision and met with the leader for early years.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lenford White

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021