

Inspection of a good school: Ladybridge High School

New York, Junction Road, Deane, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 4NG

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 September 2021 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to Ladybridge High School's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ladybridge High School said that they feel valued by staff. Pupils have a strong voice in this school. They equally value the friendships that they forge with their peers. Pupils feel well cared for, safe and happy.

Pupils were full of praise about the improvements that leaders have made to behaviour at the school. Inspectors saw pupils displaying positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers expect pupils to behave well.

Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that when it does happen, members of staff will quickly resolve any problems. Pupils also said that should conflict occur, staff provide time for them to talk about the issues and afford them opportunities to put things right.

Pupils said that the school is 'all about learning'. Most pupils enjoy their subjects. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. They do not benefit from a suitably well-planned curriculum.

The school values its diversity. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to celebrate a range of religious festivals as a school community. Pupils benefit from a full range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as musical and sporting activities. These activities help to develop pupils' wider knowledge and personal qualities.

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

Senior leaders and governors have an aspirational vision for the pupils at Ladybridge High School. They have taken some effective steps to address the weaknesses in the curriculum. For example, the proportion of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite

of subjects has risen over recent years. Even so, the key stage 3 curriculum remains underdeveloped. In some subjects, the curriculum is not as ambitious as the national curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not build up the rich body of subject knowledge that they require to be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Coupled with a lack of ambition, subject leaders are also at different stages of developing their curriculums across both key stages. Leaders have put together curriculum plans that set out the topics and concepts that pupils should learn. However, some subject leaders have not thought carefully enough about the precise knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. In these subjects, pupils' ability to recall previously learned content is not secure. This hinders pupils' achievement.

Leaders are in the process of refining their approaches to assessing how well pupils have learned the planned curriculum. Teachers are using an increasingly appropriate range of strategies to check pupils' misconceptions and forgotten knowledge. However, as subject leaders have not finalised their curriculum plans, some teachers are unclear about exactly what they should be assessing. This means that some pupils misunderstand elements of the curriculum.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders also work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND receive timely support. However, like other pupils in the school, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should. This is because of weaknesses in the curriculum.

Leaders have put in place checks to identify those pupils in Years 7 to 11 who have fallen behind with their reading. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to help these pupils to improve their ability to read accurately and fluently. Consequently, pupils who find reading more difficult make secure gains in their reading knowledge.

Leaders have increased their expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. Staff and pupils said that behaviour has improved considerably. Most pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They said that staff apply the behaviour system fairly.

Pupils believe that the personal development curriculum is a strength of the school. They told inspectors that it contributes positively to their understanding of how to have healthy relationships. The personal development curriculum also supports pupils' learning about future career opportunities.

Pupils access an array of extra-curricular activities. These include sporting events and opportunities to keep the local community tidy. Pupils build on their interests and broaden their talents. They develop a strong sense of community responsibility.

Governors are committed to the success of the school. They are challenging leaders to address some of the deficits in the curriculum. Governors and leaders prioritise the well-being of staff. They have put in place clear actions to manage staff workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders hold regular meetings to identify potential safeguarding issues and they review key cases in a timely manner. Leaders also work well with external agencies. This ensures that pupils have the help and support that they need to stay safe. Staff anticipate and address any safeguarding issues as they arise.

Pupils are taught to be alert to the risks that they can encounter outside of school. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of knife crime.

Leaders make sure that all staff, including those new to the school, are well trained and that their safeguarding knowledge is up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors have not planned an ambitious curriculum, especially in key stage 3. Across the school, subject leaders have not thought deeply enough about the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn and in which order. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, do not always develop the rich and detailed knowledge that they need to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Leaders should review the curriculum to ensure that it is suitably broad and ambitious for all pupils, including for pupils with SEND.
- Leaders' systems to check how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum are in their early stages of development. Some teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions in a timely manner. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they should and misunderstandings in their learning go unaddressed. Leaders should roll out their plans to improve the assessment systems. They should also make sure that these systems are closely linked to new curriculum plans.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	134646
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10204447
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1043
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kastur Mepani
Headteacher	Patrick Russell
Website	www.ladybridgehigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This inspection took place on 29 and 30 September 2021. An additional visit was made to the school on 4 November 2021 to gather additional evidence.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, middle leaders, teachers and members of support staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and considered the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: history, mathematics, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited several lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also carried out elements of deep dives in English, modern foreign languages, geography, computing, design technology, and art and design.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and other staff responsible for safeguarding. They considered a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, including leaders' pre-employment checks on staff. Inspectors spoke to staff, pupils and governors about wider aspects of safeguarding. They also considered survey responses from staff, parents, carers and pupils around safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined other documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document, and records about pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime, in corridors, and during registration and lessons. They also spoke to pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also discussed pupils' programme of wider personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rachel Goodwin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alyson Middlemass	Her Majesty's Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	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