

Inspection of Lathom High School: A Technology College

Glenburn Road, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6JN

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils experience a much stronger education than they did in the past. This is because leaders, governors and staff have worked effectively to improve the school since the previous inspection. Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils enjoy attending school. They appreciate the caring and friendly atmosphere. Most parents and carers are positive about the school. Pupils who are new to school settle quickly because they are welcomed into the school's family.

Pupils feel safe. They know that there is a member of staff who will help them if they have a concern. Most pupils trust that staff will resolve any issues of bullying swiftly.

Most pupils have positive relationships with each other and their teachers. Pupils are courteous and respectful. They behave well during breaktimes and in lessons. Classrooms are calm places to learn. Pupils listen carefully and try hard with their work in lessons.

Pupils like taking part in sporting events and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They benefit from a wide range of trips, including to the theatre and overseas. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their virtual tour of the Houses of Parliament. These experiences help to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as coaching younger pupils in sports and protecting the school environment through litter picking.

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

Leaders, staff and governors have successfully brought about improvements to the quality of education in the school. They are ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have reviewed and redesigned the school curriculum. Pupils in key stage 3 have more time to study a range of subjects in sufficient depth. In key stage 4, the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate are at the heart of the curriculum.

In most subjects, leaders have carefully identified the knowledge that pupils need to learn and when they should learn it. This helps teachers to build on pupils' prior knowledge. This ensures that pupils achieve well. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not as well developed. Even so, leaders are in the process of bringing this about. They have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in those subjects where the design of the curriculum is not as advanced.

Teachers use their subject-specialist knowledge well to explain concepts and deepen pupils' learning. Teachers, including those who are new to the profession, appreciate the support that they receive to improve their practice.

Assessment systems are used well in many subjects. This helps teachers to identify what pupils already know and can do. However, some teachers do not ensure that pupils have the knowledge that they need before moving onto new learning. This sometimes leads to gaps in what pupils know and can do.

Reading is promoted well across the school. Leaders ensure that pupils who have fallen behind with their reading knowledge are identified promptly. Teachers are trained in delivering phonics. This supports pupils at the early stages of reading to read accurately and fluently so that they can access the full curriculum.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Pupils with SEND have access to the same curriculum as their peers. Most teachers ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported in class. This helps these pupils to learn more as they move through the school.

Leaders and staff have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour during social times. Pastoral staff work closely with pupils who do not meet leaders' high expectations. This helps these pupils to reflect on and improve their behaviour. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted.

Leaders have recently revised the personal development curriculum. Pupils learn about democracy, the rule of law and different religions. They are respectful of differences between people. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and sex education and health education. Leaders ensure that pupils are aware of how to look after their own physical and mental health. Pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. This helps them to make well-informed choices about their next steps at the end of Year 11.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They said that leaders are supportive and considerate of their well-being and workload. Governors are committed to the school. They hold leaders to account. Governors are well informed and support leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high priority. All staff receive regular up-to-date safeguarding training, including on peer-on-peer abuse. Staff are vigilant in spotting the signs that pupils may be at risk. Leaders take prompt action when staff report concerns. They work closely with external agencies to get pupils the right help. The support for vulnerable pupils and families is effective. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not designed effectively in a small number of subjects. Leaders should continue to develop the identification of key knowledge and sequence of learning in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the subject curriculums are fully embedded so that pupils know and remember more.
- Some teachers do not check well enough what pupils know before moving on to more complex tasks. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and are not able to build on what they know. Leaders should ensure that teachers check what pupils know more consistently so they can deepen their understanding over time.
- The transition arrangements were used on this inspection to confirm that pupils benefit from a good quality education.

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	119774
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10216075
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	620
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda Bennett
Headteacher	Jane Galbraith
Website	www.lathomhighschool.org
Date of previous inspection	18 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- School leaders use two registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and members of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority and representatives of two alternative providers.

- Inspectors spoke to many pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to the staff surveys.
- No responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils were received.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Bowker	Her Majesty's Inspector

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