

Inspection of a good school: Landgate School, Bryn

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

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 June 2022

Outcome

Landgate School, Bryn continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years and students in the sixth form, flourish at Landgate School. They are happy and safe. Staff welcome pupils warmly and with enthusiasm each morning. This helps to ensure that all pupils have a positive start to their school day. Teachers and support staff successfully work together to meet the complex needs of pupils exceptionally well. As a result, pupils achieve highly and behave well.

Teachers take the time and care to know their pupils. Pupils confidently take part in a range of experiences that deepen their understanding and love of learning. Leaders provide a wide variety of visits to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils love to learn in the woodland area and go swimming at the local pool.

Students in the sixth form are delighted with their new setting. They value the well-thought-out, age-appropriate facilities such as the common room, gym and dining space. Students are supported to put their developing independent living and social interaction skills into practise every day. They also take full advantage of the shopping and sporting facilities on the campus.

Pupils understand what bullying is. They are confident that staff would help if pupils had any worries.

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

Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum gives all pupils, including children in the early years and students in the sixth form, an aspirational education, adapted to their individual needs. Teachers have detailed subject knowledge because of the regular, high-quality training and coaching that they receive. Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum identifies very clearly the important knowledge that staff will teach pupils. Teachers know

the order in which they will teach pupils key information. Staff help pupils to build new knowledge based on their previous learning. Teachers skilfully adapt the support for pupils to meet the needs of individuals. Leaders are further developing the offer of independent careers advice from key stage 3 to ensure that pupils explore all options for their future learning and development.

Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' communication and reading. Those pupils who need to develop their communication skills are supported to find an approach that works for them. By using signs, symbols or equipment, pupils learn to make choices about the activities that they want to engage in. This reduces their sense of isolation and helps them to flourish. Leaders have established a systematic approach to the teaching of reading. In early years and for older pupils where it is appropriate, staff teach pupils the phonics knowledge that they need to help them read. Pupils read from books that match their phonics knowledge. Many pupils develop as confident readers.

Teachers ensure that the learning activities they set are imaginative and creative. These practical tasks help to illustrate more complex ideas and concepts to pupils such as how muscles work and how tsunamis are created. Teachers regularly check what knowledge pupils have learned. They use symbol-supported texts, practical resources and expert questioning to adapt their lessons to help pupils overcome any misunderstandings or gaps in their knowledge. As a result, pupils remember what they have learned and deepen their understanding over time.

Staff are highly skilled and know pupils extremely well. Therapeutic sensory, physical and communication interventions are well thought out. Staff understand what extra support is needed for individual pupils and when. Routines are consistently followed by staff. This reduces anxiety for pupils and allows them to clearly understand what is expected of them. Well-trained staff identify pupils' changing special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in a highly effective way. Consequently, pupils behave exceptionally well and the school is a very calm place to learn.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. There is a strong focus on preparing pupils for their next steps and for adulthood. Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for each pupil to succeed. Opportunities to develop pupils' independence through rich and varied experiences are woven throughout the curriculum. Parents and carers are full of praise for how the school has helped their children to thrive academically and personally. Leaders have planned to provide further relevant training for staff to support the delivery of the new relationships, sex and health education policy.

Leaders are determined to make this school the best it can be for the pupils. While they expect staff to share this drive, they carefully consider the impact on workload. Staff, including early career teachers, are extremely positive about how they support one another and the consideration that they receive from leaders.

The skilled and experienced governing body has the knowledge necessary to hold leaders to account. Governors strike the right balance in supporting and challenging leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the work of the school. Those responsible for leading safeguarding are quick to act, involving other agencies when it is appropriate. Leaders keep accurate records of any safeguarding issues.

Staff are alert to each pupil's needs. They quickly spot any sign that suggests a pupil may be suffering from harm or neglect. Staff know the right procedures to follow to make sure that pupils are kept safe.

Pupils learn about safeguarding risks, such as keeping safe when online, healthy relationships and how to stay safe when outside school.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

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	134297
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10211050
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Kendrick
Headteacher	Kathy Claxton
Website	www.landgateschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Oakfield High School and with a partner school in the Aspire Federation.
- All pupils who attend the school or college have SEND and have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The number on roll has grown significantly in size since the previous inspection.
- The school operates on two sites. At the time of the inspection, sixth-form students were based at the Leigh Sports Village site.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection 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.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school, other senior leaders and a wide range of staff. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair.
- The lead inspector held a virtual meeting with two local authority representatives.
- Inspectors visited the sixth-form provision on a separate site.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these curriculum areas: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, reviewed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- An inspector visited an outdoor learning event at 'The Tread' woodland area.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. Responses to Ofsted's survey for staff were also reviewed. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Michelle Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nell Banfield

Ofsted Inspector

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