

Inspection of a good school: Loxley Hall School

Stafford Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8RS

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is David Bownds. This school is part of Manor Hall Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Redgate, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Alexander.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and compassionate school. Pupils feel safe here. A comment from one pupil echoes the views of many, 'I feel seen here'. The school acknowledges that many pupils have not had a positive experience at their previous school. The school pays close attention to pupils' past experiences and develops a sound understanding of pupils' individual needs. Staff use this knowledge to good effect to build strong, nurturing relationships with pupils, parents and carers. This work is helping pupils to re-engage in their education. Most pupils attend school regularly. However, the school has not ensured that all attendance registers are completed accurately.

The school has high expectations and is ambitious for pupils. There is a growing culture of mutual respect between staff and students here. However, across some lessons, pupils do not behave well. When this happens, lessons are disrupted and learning time is lost.

Currently, in some subjects, the curriculum is not well planned, and teachers do not always have the knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum well. This holds pupils back. The school has identified the weaknesses in its provision but has been slow to drive forward some of the improvements needed.

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

In the main, the curriculum provided by the school is broad. It covers content similar to the national curriculum well and offers pupils a range of appropriate qualifications.

However, for a small number of pupils in key stage 4, the breadth of the curriculum is too narrow. The range of subjects these pupils are studying does not prepare them sufficiently well to be successful in the future.

The school planned a curriculum that makes clear the key knowledge that pupils need to know in some subjects. However, the knowledge that pupils should learn has not been set out in enough detail across too many subjects. Where this happens, the things that pupils learn do not build on the things they have already been taught. This hinders their learning. Additionally, some teachers lack the subject knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum well. Consequently, the activities chosen by teachers do not always support pupils to learn the intended knowledge.

All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan associated with their social, emotional and mental health needs. When pupils join the school, the school works swiftly to identify any additional special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) pupils may have. The school also makes use of a range of assessments to better understand pupils' starting points. This information is shared with staff. However, despite this, some teachers do not adapt their teaching to take account of pupils' needs or their starting points. As a result, often, the content that pupils learn fails to take account of prior learning, lacks ambition and does not meet pupils' needs well. The school has recognised this and has already begun work to address this shortcoming.

Support for pupils who are at an early stage of reading is in its infancy. The school is beginning to develop a reading programme. However, too many pupils cannot read as confidently and fluently as they should.

Many pupils at the school have previously struggled to manage their own behaviour. The school makes good use of an 'emotional support unit' to help pupils learn how to manage their emotions more effectively. This work is having a positive impact. Consequently, during their time here, many pupils learn to better regulate their emotions, and most behave well. However, at present, some staff do not address pupils' poor behaviour when it happens. This disrupts learning.

The school's work to develop pupils' wider personal development is positive. For example, leaders make sure pupils have opportunities to understand about fundamental British values such as diversity through trips and visits to places of worship. Pupils value these experiences. Pupils also receive appropriate advice about their future career choices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' behaviour distracts from the intended learning in too many lessons. Some staff do little to challenge this. This disrupts learning for others too often. The school should

make sure that it continues its work to redefine its approach to behaviour management and ensure that all staff apply this consistently well so that pupils' behaviour in lessons improves.

- The precise knowledge that pupils will learn has not been well defined in too many subjects. Consequently, pupils' learning does not build on the things they already know, and they struggle to remember what they have been taught. The school should ensure that the curriculum is well planned across each subject and that knowledge is clearly defined so that pupils are able to make strong progress.
- The school's work to support pupils who struggle to read has been slow to materialise. Consequently, too many pupils are unable to read as well as they should. This undermines their ability to access the wider curriculum. The school should ensure that it accurately identifies the gaps in pupils' reading and provides support so that all pupils are able to read as well as they should.
- The school's oversight of its work lacks rigour. The school has failed to identify errors in the coding of registers, and the narrowing of the curriculum for a small number of pupils. The school must ensure that monitoring processes ensure the curriculum is implemented with suitable breadth for all pupils and that registers are completed accurately.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Loxley Hall School, to be good in December 2014.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142170
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290625
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Alexander
CEO of trust	Richard Redgate
Headteacher	David Bownds
Website	www.loxleyhall.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is one of 14 schools that comprise the Manor Hall Academy Trust.
- The school currently uses three providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils. Two of these providers are unregistered.
- Many pupils attending Loxley Hall have been permanently excluded from their previous school. All of them have an EHC plan relating to their social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and with other senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, leaders from across the multi-academy trust and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors held discussions with the leaders of two alternative provision education providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, information and communication technology, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarahjane Cuncannon Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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