

Inspection of Dean Trust Wigan

Greenhey, Orrell, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN5 0DQ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The headteacher of this school is Jennifer Evans. This school is part of The Dean Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tarun Kapur, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Damian McGann. There is also an academies director, Barry Bridden, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff at the school are right to identify the Dean Trust Wigan as an improving school. Pupils recognise and appreciate the changes taken to improve their experiences at the school. As a result, most pupils feel happy and safe.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic achievement, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are beginning to benefit from a rich, varied and ambitious curriculum that has been well designed across subjects. However, these curriculums are not consistently delivered well by teachers. This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they should.

Pupils understand how they should behave. Most pupils meet the school's raised expectations for behaviour. In lessons, most pupils embody the school's values of 'be ready, be respectful, be responsible' through their improved attitudes to learning.

Too many pupils are regularly absent from school. As a result, pupils miss out on important learning and do not achieve as well as they should.

Personal development is central to the school's work. However, much of the personal development programme is new and not fully embedded. This means that pupils are less aware than they should be of British values and the importance of tolerance and respect for those who are different to themselves.

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

The school has a sharp focus on improving the quality of education. The curriculum is ambitious and well thought out. Improvements in the curriculum mean that many pupils are encouraged to take the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

The school has thought carefully about the logical order in which they introduce pupils to new concepts and vocabulary. Consequently, the building blocks of knowledge that pupils learn over time have been mapped out well. The school makes sure that teachers are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it.

In recent years, a significant number of new teachers and subject leaders have joined the school. The school has set about supporting these teachers so that they gain the expertise to deliver learning effectively. However, despite this support, the delivery of the curriculum is too variable. Some pupils do not learn the intended curriculum well enough. This is because some teachers do not use effective methods to build on pupils' prior knowledge. As a result, pupils' subject knowledge is not secure.

In some subjects, assessment systems to check where pupils are insecure in their learning are underdeveloped. Some teachers do not routinely check that pupils' knowledge is embedded. This means that for some subjects teachers are not clear

about gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school has taken some steps to promote a reading culture across school. However, the school's reading curriculum is still underdeveloped. This means that some pupils do not read widely or often enough from a rich body of texts or routinely read for pleasure. The school identifies pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge and provides programmes of reading support to help them to catch up with their peers.

The needs of pupils with SEND are quickly and accurately identified. The school ensures that staff have the information that they need to adapt the delivery of the curriculum. In the main, this helps to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met suitably in the classroom. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life.

The school has taken effective steps to embed clear routines and manage poor behaviour. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Typically, pupils are engaged and want to learn. The school has made efforts to improve the rate of pupils' attendance, with some success. However, a significant minority of pupils, including pupils with SEND, still regularly miss school. This hinders their progress through the curriculum.

The school places great importance on pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to have a voice in decisions to improve their experiences at the school. For example, the student leadership team has championed a school allotment. Pupils understand the importance of looking after their mental and physical health. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. However, the delivery of elements of the personal development programme is variable. This means that some pupils are not as well informed as they should be about fundamental British values. For example, some pupils display a limited awareness and understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect for people who are different to themselves.

Pupils receive an effective programme of careers education. This helps pupils to make sensible decisions about their future.

Trust leaders, together with the governing body and senior leaders, know what needs to be done to improve the school. They are starting to bring about the necessary improvements. Many staff enjoy working at the school and are appreciative of how the school has taken steps to be considerate of their well-being and workload, while trying to bring about positive change.

Parents and carers are welcomed into school for activities such as information evenings for pupils in key stage 4. This helps parents to work together with the school to support pupils' learning at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The delivery of the curriculum is too variable. Some teachers do not use effective methods to build on pupils' prior knowledge. This means that pupils' subject knowledge is not secure. The school should ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to deliver the curriculum.
- The school has not ensured that the use of assessment is consistent and coherent across all subjects. This means that in some subjects, teachers are not clear about the gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that a consistent approach to assessment supports the swift identification of gaps in pupils' learning so that they can be addressed.
- The school's reading curriculum is underdeveloped. This means that some pupils do not read widely or often enough. They do not read from a rich body of texts or routinely read for pleasure. The school should ensure that pupils are supported to read high-quality texts across the curriculum. They should also ensure that pupils are supported to read for enjoyment.
- There is a group of pupils who do not attend school often enough. This hinders their progress through the curriculum. The school should ensure that these pupils come to school regularly and on time.
- The delivery of elements of the new personal development programme is variable. This means that pupils are less aware than they should be of British values and the importance of tolerance and respect for those who are different to themselves. The school should embed their ambitious approach to personal development so that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

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	144519
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10268281
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	807
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Damian McGann
Headteacher	Jennifer Evans
Website	www.deantrustwigan.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined The Dean Trust in April 2017.
- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2023. Since the previous inspection a number of new senior leaders and subject leaders have joined the school.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- 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 and other members of staff. They also spoke with members of the trust, the local governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to 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 leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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 carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics, science, physical education and religious education. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Joe Barker	Ofsted Inspector
Kelly Leonard	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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