

Inspection of an outstanding school: The Loyne Specialist School

Sefton Drive, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 2QD

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 January 2024

Outcome

The Loyne Specialist School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this incredibly vibrant school. Staff expertly use pupils' preferred mode of communication to greet them with kind words and a smile at the start of each day. The school's strong transition programme aids pupils in settling in quickly when they first start. They benefit significantly from the caring relationships they enjoy with staff, who know them extremely well. Pupils are happy.

The school has the highest aspirations for pupils' achievements. Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils take immense pride in living up to the high expectations that the school has of their behaviour. This is evident in pupils' respectful conduct throughout the school. Pupils thrive in the school's calm and harmonious atmosphere.

At the heart of the school's aspirations is the desire for pupils to be exceedingly well prepared for their future lives. The extensive programme of activities and experiences that the school provides helps pupils to increase their self-belief. They become confident, resilient and independent young people. Students in the sixth form welcome many opportunities to make a positive contribution to their local community. For example, they sell their own handmade products at the local market.

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

The school has established a very ambitious curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects in each key stage. The important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn is set out clearly. The curriculum prepares pupils remarkably well for each stage of their education. In the early years, children make a strong start to their time at the school. Students in the sixth form gain a suite of qualifications that set them up well for further study, the world of work and volunteering.

Staff access a bespoke package of training to understand in more depth the specific needs of pupils. They are especially skilled at identifying and supporting pupils' additional needs. Staff draw extensively on the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to design engaging and appropriate activities. This helps pupils to build their knowledge and skills incrementally. The work that pupils produce is of a consistently high quality.

Staff have an intricate understanding of the curriculums they teach. They make regular and precise checks on what pupils know, remember and can do. Staff use this information expertly to support pupils to address any gaps or misconceptions that they may have about their learning. This means that pupils gain a deep and rich body of subject knowledge and achieve particularly well.

The school prioritises the development of pupils' reading, language and communication skills. Pupils with communication needs receive nuanced and focused support. This includes the use of sign language, visual aids and modern technology. As a result, pupils learn how to articulate their thoughts and feelings to others with confidence.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive the timely support they need to develop their phonics knowledge. They read from books that are well matched to the sounds they already know. This helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers. The school provides parents with reading packs that help them to support their children's reading at home.

Pupils are self-assured in their own abilities. They show extraordinary levels of motivation and positivity towards their learning. The school provides effective support to pupils who may need to improve their levels of attendance.

The school makes certain that pupils access a rich and wide set of experiences that make an impressive contribution to their personal development. Pupils relish opportunities to develop their talents and interests. For example, the 'sing and sign' choir performs at school assemblies and in the community. Pupils learn how to look after their physical health through a broad programme of movement-based activities. Staff take great care to ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, including sexual health. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of careers education and work experience placements.

Governors provide strong strategic oversight of the school. They carry out their statutory duties effectively and have robust processes and systems to assure themselves about the quality of education that the school provides. Staff value the care and support that they receive for their workload. For example, the detailed curriculum provided by the school helps them to carry out their duties with expertise and integrity.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 school to be outstanding in June 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	119892
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10290073
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ann-Marie Houghton
Headteacher	Susan Campbell
Website	www.loyneschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2018

Information about this school

- All pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- The school provides for pupils with a broad range of SEND, including complex needs. This includes autism, specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, and social and speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils have severe learning difficulties, hearing and visual impairments or physical disabilities.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school has nursery provision for children aged between two- and four-years-old. At the time of this inspection, there were no pupils aged two or three on roll.
- 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading and communication, physical development and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice chair of governors. He also spoke to the local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and the provision for pupils' personal development.
- An inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys to consider. Inspectors gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Morley

Ofsted Inspector

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