

Inspection of The High School Leckhampton

Farm Lane, Leckhampton, Cheltenham GL51 3FS

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Helen Wood. The school is part of the Balcarras Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Dominic Burke, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bernard Roberts.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are exceptionally proud to attend The High School Leckhampton. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are exemplary. As a 'Rights Respecting School', pupils understand how their behaviour has an impact on others. This means that the school community has the mutual respect for others at its heart. On the very rare occasion that behaviour falls below expectations, leaders quickly act to maintain the high standards. Pupils learn why the behaviour was unacceptable. Therefore, poor behaviour is rarely repeated and pupils feel safe.

Pupils relish the opportunity to take on leadership roles in this school. They make significant contributions to the running of the school, for example as members of the student council and environmental groups or as peer mentors and librarians. Leaders actively listen to pupils' views and opinions about the school. Changes happen as a result, so pupils feel empowered to make a difference.

Pupils at this school develop their character and interests alongside their academic achievements. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. For example, pupils can take part in both competitive sport as well as physical activity to support their health and mental well-being. Trips, visits and guest speakers are provided for all pupils. Pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged, enthusiastically take part in this wider curriculum.

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

The school has planned a broad and highly ambitious curriculum. It extends beyond the national curriculum in all subject areas. The school has set out the knowledge it wants pupils to have as informed citizens. Pupils learn what makes each subject unique. They routinely use sophisticated subject-specific language. This leads to eloquent and confident pupil discussions about their learning.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and explain concepts clearly to pupils. The teaching activities used enable pupils to remember their learning securely over time. Effective questioning and assessments identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge or understanding. Pupils are keen to make improvements to their work. As a result, pupils learn the curriculum exceptionally well.

Reading matters at this school. It sits at the centre of every subject, with texts used to broaden pupils' understanding of subjects. Pupils and adults share a genuine love of reading. This extends into the wider school community with families and governors sharing the 'community read'. Adults are passionate that all pupils need to be fluent and confident readers. The school rapidly identifies pupils who find reading challenging. It provides the support pupils need to catch up with their peers and to build the comprehension skills they need to enjoy reading.

The school accurately and swiftly identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It actively engages pupils and parents with planning and

reviewing support. Pupils with SEND receive the support they need to learn the curriculum as well as their peers.

Pupils are very well prepared for adult life. They receive an age-appropriate sex and relationships education. They have extensive opportunities to debate and discuss different viewpoints and moral dilemmas. Pupils not only understand what fundamental British values are but are able to reflect on what they mean for them as citizens. The extensive careers programme gives pupils in all year groups multiple opportunities to meet employers and further education providers. This rich set of experiences means pupils are highly aspirational for their future. Pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy school and value education.

The school has a relentless drive for excellence. Leaders are deliberate in their decisions to ensure that the ethos and culture of the school are well embedded into all areas of school life. The school considers the workload and well-being of staff, particularly as the school expands in size. It provides staff with the training they need to be highly effective. Staff feel trusted and motivated. The governors, trustees and executive leaders have an accurate view of the school. They support and challenge the school in equal measure. This strong, shared vision means that pupils attending this school receive an outstanding education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	148563
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10298106
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	391
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bernard Roberts
CEO of the trust	Dominic Burke
Headteacher	Helen Wood
Website	www.hsl.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Balcarras Trust.
- The school opened as a new school in September 2021 to Year 7 only. Each year an additional year group has joined the school. The school currently has Years 7 to 9 attending.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- 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.

- 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also spoke with teaching and support staff and representatives from governors, trust executive leaders and trustees.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including representatives from the pupil leadership groups.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, physical education, modern foreign languages, history and religious 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 viewed a range of school documents, including minutes of the local governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sandy Hayes	Ofsted Inspector
Alun Williams	Ofsted Inspector

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