

Inspection of Saddleworth School

Huddersfield Road, Diggle, Oldham OL3 5NU

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

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

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy attending Saddleworth School. Pupils have adapted well to the recent move to the new school building, and they appreciate the positive impact that the updated facilities are having on their learning environment. Most pupils feel happy and safe in school.

The school is increasingly ambitious for all pupils. However, some of the renewed subject curriculums are in the early stages of implementation. In these subjects, the school has not fully addressed the knowledge gaps that pupils have because of weaknesses in the previous curriculums. Therefore, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

During lessons, most pupils meet the high standards of behaviour that the school expects of them. However, some pupils are late to lessons or miss some of their lessons completely. This hampers these pupils' ability to build knowledge well over time.

In the main, the school is quick to deal with incidents of bullying when they are reported. However, some pupils told inspectors that instances of derogatory language and homophobic comments are not identified by the school consistently well.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a selection of sports, drama, gardening and chess clubs. Pupils relish taking on positions of responsibility. For example, older pupils run clubs enjoyed by younger members of the school.

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

The revised curriculum is aspirational for all pupils, including for those pupils with SEND. The school has ensured that new subject leaders have been well trained in curriculum design. Subject curriculums have been carefully organised, and they clearly identify the key building blocks of learning. This is helping pupils, particularly those in key stage 3, to learn increasingly well.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and, for the most part, they explain concepts to pupils with clarity. Teachers routinely check what pupils know and remember. This is enabling teachers to become more adept in identifying pupils' misconceptions. In some subjects, teachers address these misconceptions quickly so that pupils can continue to build on what they know already.

In other subjects, the new curriculums are not fully embedded. The school has not ensured that gaps in older pupils' learning, because of flaws in the previous curriculums, are fully identified and remedied. In these subjects, some pupils do not

have solid foundations on which to build their knowledge. This limits how well pupils can achieve in these subjects.

The school has prioritised reading. For example, Year 7 pupils' reading knowledge is assessed when they join the school, and those pupils who find reading more difficult are given appropriate support to catch up with their peers. Typically, pupils in key stage 3 enjoy reading. However, the same is not true of pupils in key stage 4. These pupils do not benefit from the same effective reading programme as younger pupils. Some older pupils do not read as fluently as they should. This hinders how well these pupils access the wider curriculum.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND well. It secures appropriate support for those pupils with complex needs when required. Many teachers use the information that they receive about pupils with SEND successfully to meet the needs of these pupils well. However, in those subjects where the curriculums are in the earlier stages of implementation, teachers' adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum are less secure. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn well.

Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning, and they want to succeed. Staff apply the behaviour policy fairly. For a very small number of pupils, the use of suspensions has become repetitive. Gaps in these pupils' learning are often compounded.

The school has clear systems in place to support pupils who do not attend school as often as they should. Many pupils have increased their overall rates of attendance. However, there are a few pupils who miss lessons despite being in school. Staff provide appropriate pastoral support for these pupils. However, these pupils are not benefiting fully from the improved subject curriculums delivered by specialist staff.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils' wider development. For example, the school's bespoke 'SPACE' curriculum enables pupils to build an understanding of how to stay safe online and how to develop healthy relationships. However, the school's work in promoting diversity is less well established. As a result, some pupils do not fully grasp the negative impact that the use of derogatory language can have on others.

The school provides high-quality opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work. Pupils value the information that they receive about careers and further education. They are well informed about the next steps available to them.

Leaders, including members of the governing body, have high aspirations for the continued improvement of the school. The majority of staff feel well supported by the school. They said that leaders consider their workload, especially when changes are made to the curriculum. Parents and carers appreciate the regular communications from the school about their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In those subjects where updated curriculums are least embedded, teachers have not identified and addressed older pupils' gaps in knowledge. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils are not achieving as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers are well equipped to fully address gaps left by previous curriculum designs. This is to ensure that pupils, including those with SEND, can benefit fully from strengthened subject curriculums.
- Some key stage 4 pupils, including those who may struggle with reading, do not receive appropriate support to develop their reading knowledge. This limits how well these pupils build their reading fluency and comprehension, which hinders their access to the wider curriculum. The school should ensure that these pupils, including those at the early stages of reading, are supported effectively so that they become confident and competent readers.
- There are a few pupils who frequently miss lessons. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress that they should through the curriculum. The school should ensure that these pupils attend their lessons more regularly so that they can benefit from increased continuity in their learning.
- The school's work to promote diversity is not as embedded as it should be. As a result, some pupils do not have an awareness of the consequences that the use of derogatory language can have on others. The school should ensure that it develops pupils' understanding and respect of others so that they 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	105736
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10289896
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alice Rea
Headteacher	Michael Anderson
Website	www.saddleworth.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers for a 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- 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 puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Joe Barker	Ofsted Inspector
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