

Inspection of an outstanding school: Hollinwood Academy

Roman Road, Hollinwood, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 3PT

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Outcome

Hollinwood Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Laura Millard. This school is part of the Newbridge Group 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 (CEO), Clare John, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Williams.

What is it like to attend this school?

A real sense of enjoyment, purpose and positivity permeates through Hollinwood Academy. This is a happy school, filled with joy and smiles. The staff know the pupils and their individual needs well. They plan meticulously to address these in a bespoke manner. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They talk to trusted adults if they have any worries or concerns.

The school has very high expectations for all pupils. Pupils flourish and achieve well. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exceptionally strong. Clear routines ensure that there is a calm learning environment. Staff are highly skilled at noticing when a pupil might have increased anxiety. They step in and effectively give pupils support. This helps them to calm down and return to their learning.

The school has an extensive programme to promote pupils' personal development. Staff understand each pupils' interests, talents and ambitions. They use this information to personalise the activities that are provided. Pupils have regular opportunities to go out into the local area. They visit shops, cafes and entertainment venues to practise communicating with people outside of the school. The school constantly reflects on the many options available. This ensures experiences are well matched to pupils' personal development needs.

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

Across all phases, the curriculum is highly ambitious and meticulously designed. The school has defined exactly what it wants pupils to learn and when in each subject. Teachers rigorously check what pupils learn, quickly identifying and addressing any gaps

in their knowledge. The school has a comprehensive understanding of each pupil's needs. Staff use this information skilfully to craft a highly personalised curriculum that is both aspirational and matched carefully to the targets on pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans.

As time passes, pupils' confidence grows rapidly because they start to experience more and more success. When appropriate, pupils attain appropriate, accredited qualifications, vocational learning and GCSEs. They go on to secure further education, employment or training.

Teaching pupils to communicate is a high priority. Staff are trained in the use of a wide range of communication tools and strategies. These methods enable non-verbal pupils to integrate well with their peers and to feel included in school life. From the early years onwards, they learn to express their choices, answer questions and to convey any anxieties. There is a highly effective programme of phonics for those who are at the early stages of reading. Pupils learn to read fluently and independently. Across all phases, staff provide books that help pupils to practise the sounds that they are learning. Younger children enthusiastically listen to the stories that staff read to them throughout the school day. A range of opportunities are in place to promote a love of reading. Many pupils said how much they enjoy reading and the range of books that are available to them in the library.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. Skilled staff sensitively calm down any anxieties that pupils might have so that pupils feel happy and safe. Sensory areas around school are available for pupils to use. These are very successful in helping pupils to regulate their emotions.

Pupils have opportunities to develop their leadership skills, for example, by representing the school council or by supporting other pupils as an anti-bullying ambassador. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sporting and musical clubs. They also enjoy performing at a musical festival.

Careers advice is exceptionally well considered. Staff help to guide pupils impressively towards their future aspirations. A variety of work-related opportunities are threaded through the curriculum at every opportunity. This inspirational curriculum extends into sixth form, where students are enabled to become increasingly independent as they start to prepare for adult life. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders are relentless in their drive and determination to ensure that pupils receive the highest quality of education. The school continually considers the latest research in learning and behaviour in relation to the targets on pupils' EHC plans. Staff feel well supported. They appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

Trustees and governors offer leaders high levels of support and challenge. This leads to exemplary educational provision for pupils in school.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in July 2018.

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	140388
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10290249
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	293
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	22
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Williams
CEO	Clare John
Headteacher	Laura Millard
Website	www.hollinwoodacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school caters for pupils who have an autism and/or additional diagnoses. The majority of pupils have an EHC plan.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the CEO, staff, pupils and members of the board of trustees and members of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects. An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- 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 spoke to staff about pupils' behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through discussions held with pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ahmed Marikar

His Majesty's Inspector

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