

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: North Leamington School

Sandy Lane, Blackdown, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 6RD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

North Leamington School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Mike Lowdell. This school is part of the Elm Tree Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mike Lowdell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Freeth.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this caring and purposeful school community. They enjoy their learning and make every effort to meet the school's high expectations. The school's 'CORE' values of commitment, opportunity, respect and excellence are at the heart of all that goes on at North Leamington. There are positive and mutually respectful relationships in the school. Staff know the pupils very well. Pupils are happy and safe at school and know they are listened to.

A broad and ambitious curriculum prepares pupils well for life. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and always aim to do their best. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. They behave in a sensible and orderly manner, showing kindness and respect to all. Parents and carers have a high regard for the school and its staff. One parent spoke for many when they said: 'We feel very privileged to have a school like NLS.'

Pupils can experience a range of wider opportunities that develop their talents and interests. Each week, there are many after-school clubs for pupils. These include different sports, philosophy, Pride, choir and Rock Band. They also benefit from the trips and visits provided for them.

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

The curriculum is ambitious in all three key stages. The progressive curriculum across all

subjects links learning from one year to the next. There is flexibility in the structure of lessons that allows learning, if needed, to be revisited and consolidated before new material is taught. Staff subject knowledge is strong. This, along with teachers' ability to demonstrate and explain lesson content well, inspires confidence in pupils. The curriculum makes clear the subject-specific vocabulary pupils need to learn. Teachers check on pupils' learning regularly and use this information to make their teaching even more effective.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), access the curriculum. Staff receive up-to-date and accurate information so they can adapt learning for pupils with SEND. Among the many examples of adaptations are visual aids, materials for literacy support and information sheets and booklets that pupils can refer to in lessons. Reading is a high priority for the school. Pupils experience a range of different texts. The school identifies and provides support to enable pupils to read fluently and with confidence.

Pupils behave well. They are rewarded for their positive commitment to the school's values. Inspectors saw no examples of low-level negative behaviours in classrooms or around the school. Pupils are attentive in their lessons and work very well with their classmates, supporting and encouraging each other. The school takes a proactive approach to attendance. Dedicated staff support is provided for pupils who need it. As a result, persistent absence in the last two years has dramatically reduced.

Staff are dedicated and passionate about supporting and helping pupils. Their commitment to inclusion is evident. One example is the school's work in supporting young carers. The school has just been awarded the national accolade of the educational setting of the year for the Young Carers in School initiative.

There are clear themes in the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme that link learning from one year to the next. However, pupils do not always remember what they have learned in PSHE. Some do not have a secure knowledge of fundamental British values. Although they might, for example, have some notions of the rule of law and democracy, they cannot articulate why these are worthwhile values.

There are a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, including transition leaders, eco-leaders and sports leaders. Pupils also take part in a wide range of charity work, supporting them to develop their understanding of the communities they live in further. Other wider opportunities to understand other cultures include international trips such as to Iceland and New York.

Careers education, information, advice and guidance is a real strength at North Leamington. The school has put in place a comprehensive programme to prepare pupils for their careers and futures beyond school. The school has recently been awarded the Careers School Award.

Leadership, at all levels, is strong within the school. Staff appreciate that the school is

supportive of their workload and well-being. Trustees and governors know the school, its staff, pupils and community well. They have considerable knowledge and expertise. They hold the school to account and regularly visit to have meetings with staff and support the work the school does.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not remember consistently well what they have learned in PSHE. Not all have a secure knowledge of fundamental British values. The school should further develop the PSHE curriculum to ensure that key knowledge and concepts can be remembered and understood so pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 good for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

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	142202
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10344058
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,475
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	258
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Freeth
CEO of the trust	Mike Lowdell
Headteacher	Mike Lowdell
Website	www.northleamington.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 September 2019

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 uses three registered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 the evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and spoke with subject leaders and teachers, including early career teachers. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school development plans, behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governor meetings and school policies.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the online staff survey.

Inspection team

David Buckle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Patrick Amieli

Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Wells

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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