

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Lancasterian School

Elizabeth Slinger Road, West Didsbury, Manchester M20 2XA

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

## **Outcome**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Lancasterian School provides a nurturing and stimulating environment, where pupils are happy. The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils achieve well from their individual starting points.

Staff know pupils well and build positive, trusting relationships with them. Pupils feel valued and cared for. They learn useful skills to manage their own feelings and emotions. They are kind and respectful towards each other and staff. They show a genuine interest in their learning.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop socially, emotionally and physically. They regularly take part in trips, including to adventure farms, zoos and museums. These help them to develop their mental health and cultural understanding. Some pupils are members of the eco-council and rights respecting group. These opportunities enable them to voice their opinions and see these acted upon. Pupils also enjoy a variety of activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and sports.

Pupils are well prepared for their future lives. All pupils in key stage 4 undertake work experience placements, such as in local supermarkets, cycle workshops and care homes. Pupils in Year 11 enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as preparing and serving food to staff and pupils in the 'Café'.

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

The school is ambitious for its pupils, all of whom have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has made improvements to the quality of education for pupils, including for children in the early years. The school provides three flexible

curriculum pathways for pupils to follow depending on their needs. The school is quick to identify pupils' additional needs. Information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans is used to ensure the curriculum meets pupils' needs. Staff provide lots of sensory stimulation. This enables pupils to engage with the world around them and to develop their own identity. A team of health and therapy professionals, including music therapists, works effectively together to help pupils develop their physical skills and regulate their behaviour.

In most subjects, the school has identified the knowledge that pupils, including children in the Reception Year, need to learn. Pupils have opportunities to build on their prior knowledge and make positive progress through a range of subjects. However, a few subjects which have been recently refined are still being embedded. This means that pupils' knowledge of some topics is not as secure.

In the main, staff deliver the curriculum well. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Teachers typically use assessment strategies to check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions. However, in a few subjects, the school is still developing its checks on what pupils know and remember. This affects how well they learn new content, as it is unclear whether pupils are building on what they already know.

Communication and language development are at the core of what the school does. Staff skilfully use a variety of resources, including props, signs and technology. This supports pupils to express their feelings and wishes. Pupils enjoy singing songs and rhymes. This enables them to enhance their communication skills. They receive effective support from trained staff to develop their pre-reading and phonics skills. This is helping pupils with their reading development. Pupils have many opportunities to read as they move through the school.

Pupils follow clear and consistent routines. The school has a calm atmosphere during lessons and breaktimes. Pupils socialise well in the dining hall and in their classrooms during lunchtimes. The school employs a variety of strategies to promote regular attendance. It works closely with families and provides effective support for pupils who face challenges in attending school regularly, including for those with medical needs. Pupils' rates of attendance have improved over time.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is a key strength. A range of people visit the school to inspire and motivate pupils, for example in football and rugby. Pupils learn about their rights and democracy. They find out about different religions and beliefs. This helps to foster respect for differences between people. The school encourages pupils to make healthy lifestyle choices. Pupils benefit from high-quality careers education and guidance. This enables them to make informed choices about their futures. The school has established close links with other educational settings to ensure that pupils have smooth transitions to the next stages of their education, employment or training.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They value opportunities to share good practice and to access training. Most staff feel that the school considers their workload, for example, by providing time to develop the curriculum. Governors bring a broad range of experience to their roles, which enables them to provide strong support and challenge to the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few subjects, the new curriculum and strategies for checking pupils' learning are not fully embedded. In these subjects, pupils have some gaps in their prior learning and this affects how well they learn new content. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, the revised curriculums and assessment strategies are fully embedded so that pupils' knowledge is secure and they achieve well.

## **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 July 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105608
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347970
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Adel White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Randall
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lancasterian.manchester.co.uk">www.lancasterian.manchester.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	9 and 10 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- All pupils have an EHC plan. The school caters for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, physical or mobility problems, sensory difficulties and language and communication difficulties.
- The school currently provides education for pupils aged four to 16.
- Since the last inspection, one new deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and a chair of governors have been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- 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 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 their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed some pupils read to familiar staff.
- 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' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at break and lunchtime. No responses were received to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents through Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Simpson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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