

Inspection of Longdendale High School

Spring Street, Hyde SK14 8LW

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They spoke positively to inspectors about a range of clubs and activities, such as dance, debating and sports. Pupils relish taking on leadership roles where they can make a difference, such as school councillors, prefects and dance-club leaders. They benefit from the opportunity to take part in visits and trips. Many pupils raise money for charities.

Leaders have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Older pupils and staff reported that behaviour is better than in the past. Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times.

Pupils learn about the importance of respecting differences between people. Most pupils have positive relationships with each other and their teachers. Pupils who spoke with inspectors reported that they feel safe and happy in school. They are confident that leaders and staff will listen to their concerns. Staff deal well with incidents of bullying.

The quality of education is getting better than it has been in the past. Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. However, these expectations have not resulted in high achievement in all subjects. Despite improvements, some weaknesses remain in how well some subject curriculums are designed and implemented. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

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

In recent years, leaders have improved many aspects of the school. They have developed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders are reviewing and refining subject curriculums. These refinements are at different stages of development. In some subjects, leaders are clear about the knowledge that pupils should gain and in which order it should be taught. This helps pupils to build on their prior learning and remember more. In other subjects, leaders are still in the process of developing what they want pupils to know and the order in which this new learning should be taught. Some subject leaders do not ensure that teachers choose the most appropriate activities to enable pupils to learn what they intend. This means that some pupils, including those with SEND, do not develop a deep understanding of the subjects they are learning.

Some teachers do not check well enough if pupils have understood their work. This means that they do not know when pupils have missing knowledge or if they have remembered their learning. Consequently, some pupils are moved on to new learning without first securing understanding. This stops them from building on what they know and can do.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. They share this information with teachers. Some teachers use this information better than others to adapt how they implement the curriculum for pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should.

Leaders are implementing a new strategy to improve pupils' reading skills. They identify those pupils who are behind in reading in Years 7 to 10. Trained staff give younger pupils individual help to catch up. However, some pupils, particularly those who are older, still struggle with reading. This hinders how well they can follow the curriculum across the breadth of subjects they study.

Leaders have introduced ways of encouraging reading for pleasure. For example, they have redeveloped the library, introducing a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. However, leaders have not ensured that staff teach reading strategies in a consistent manner. Consequently, pupils' experience of reading widely and often is not always positive. Some pupils cannot read confidently or fluently.

The school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. Many pupils reported that lessons are rarely disrupted. This helps them to focus on their work.

Leaders work with families to increase pupils' attendance. However, the attendance rates of some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND remain below those of other pupils at the school. Consequently, these pupils miss out on important learning.

Pupils receive age-appropriate information about relationships, sex and health education. They learn about different religions and cultures. Pupils receive appropriate careers information, education, advice and guidance, including about apprenticeships. This helps them to make choices about their future and prepares them for the world of work.

Most staff enjoy working at the school. They feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. The chief executive officer (CEO) and members of the local governing body and trustees provide effective support for leaders. They have increased the extent to which they challenge leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training. They know how to recognise the possible signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know when to pass on concerns about a pupil. Leaders work well with external agencies, including the police and the local authority, to help and support pupils when needed. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and when they are out and about in the local area, such as the nearby reservoirs.

At the time of the inspection, the timetables relating to the small number of pupils who attend part time were not up to date. Leaders are taking action to rectify this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, subject leaders are still in the process of defining what pupils should learn and in what order. This is hindering some pupils from learning as well as they could. In these subjects, leaders should ensure that they define the most important knowledge that pupils should learn and when. This will help pupils to develop their understanding over time in these subjects.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to check whether pupils have understood their learning. This means that they move on to new content without making sure that pupils know and remember their earlier learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address gaps in learning before they move on, so that pupils can build on previous knowledge over time.
- Some teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to teach the knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This means that some pupils, including those with SEND, are not able to deepen their learning. Leaders and governors should provide teachers with the support that they need to implement the intended curriculums well.
- Across the school, there are a number of pupils who are behind in reading. They do not read as fluently or as often as they should. This means that they cannot follow the wider curriculum as well as their peers. Leaders should ensure that staff help those who struggle with reading to read more often and catch up quickly with their classmates.
- Some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND do not attend school as often as they should. Consequently, these pupils miss essential learning. Leaders should work with pupils and families to improve the attendance of these groups.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	148431
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10259422
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	804
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Foote
Headteacher	Andrea Jones
Website	www.longdendalehighschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school in January 2021. When its predecessor school, Longdendale High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate and required significant improvement.
- The school joined the Stamford Park multi-academy trust in January 2021.
- There have been a number of changes in leadership and staffing in recent years.
- Recently, there have been significant changes to governance. This includes the appointment of a new chair of the local governing body.
- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff. An inspector spoke with the CEO of the Stamford Park multi-academy trust, local governors and the chair of the board of trustees. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to many pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the single central record. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of an alternative provider.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, school-improvement plan, minutes of governor meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in computing, English, mathematics, history, physical education and science. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Eleanor Overland	His Majesty's Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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