

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Lisburne School

Half Moon Lane, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5LB

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Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

## **Outcome**

Lisburne School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

Pupils are exceptionally happy at Lisburne school, where they flourish. They develop deep and meaningful bonds with each other and staff. They can talk to any member of staff if they are worried or concerned. This contributes to them feeling very safe.

Pupils are highly respectful. They celebrate cultural and religious diversity and learn that they should not treat people differently because of what they look like, where they are from or what they believe in. Should bullying take place, leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Leaders expect pupils' behaviour to be exceptional. Pupils respond well to leaders' and staff's exceedingly high expectations. They are positive role models and proud school ambassadors. Leaders and staff set no limits to pupils' achievement. Pupils progress exceptionally well in many areas of the curriculum.

Pupils shine in their various leadership roles. They plan their own events to raise money for a range of worthy causes. Pupils enthused about their recent excursion to London, where they visited Buckingham Palace, rode the London Eye, toured the Houses of Parliament and ate and socialised in a restaurant.

Pupils take pleasure in outdoor learning. They enjoy growing plants, building dens and making campfires in the school's wooded area. They look forward to their annual residential learning, where they hone their rock climbing, archery and canoeing skills.

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

Leaders, governors and staff have created a high quality, well organised and unique curriculum. They strengthen it with a range of rich and exciting visits and learning experiences. Leaders offer a secure and stimulating school environment in which pupils, and children in the early years, thrive.

Leaders are at the forefront of developments and research in special education. They find different ways to cater for the needs of each pupil. Teachers and teaching assistants are committed to implementing leaders' vision to develop pupils into unique, courageous and creative learners. Staff are highly skilled. They benefit from extensive specialist professional development. Leaders give staff the support that they need to teach all the subjects in the curriculum consistently well.

Teachers have a comprehensive knowledge of how well pupils are learning. They make sure that pupils understand key information and regularly revisit and reinforce learning to make certain that pupils are ready to move on to new themes.

From the early years, pupils have access to books which are written by a diverse range of authors. Older pupils who spoke with inspectors talked enthusiastically about books on many different topics, including human and civil rights.

Leaders' early reading and phonics programme engages pupils well. Staff implement the programme skilfully. They are careful to ensure that the books that pupils read match the letters and sounds that they know. Children in the early years, and pupils with sensory needs and processing difficulties, often immerse themselves in books through dance, drama and highly imaginative storytelling.

Leaders work with an extensive range of external providers and parents and carers to make sure that pupils receive the support that they need. School experts in specific needs are committed to ensuring that pupils learn well. For example, specialist equipment, including touch-and-text-to-speech devices, is available to give pupils access to the curriculum. A range of school-based therapists, including occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists, successfully remove barriers to pupils' learning.

As soon as children start in the Reception class, they learn how to express themselves and manage their emotions and feelings. Pupils' behaviour is typically impeccable during assemblies. This was evident during the inspection when pupils sat in a large circle in the hall. They remained calm and focused as they used different signs and symbols (Makaton) to explain the meaning of the word 'resilience'. Because of their ability to self-regulate and staff's expert understanding of their behaviour, disruption in lessons is rare.

Leaders' work to enhance pupils' personal and social development is all encompassing. Staff equip pupils with the social skills and strategies that they need to interact confidently with others and to attend appointments such as with the paediatrician.

Pupils develop their musical and sporting talents well. Members of their leadership teams make their views known. Recently, the eco-council selected the fruits and vegetables that they wanted to grow in the school's new polytunnels. During the inspection pupils celebrated the summer solstice and the Glastonbury Festival. They created their own pyramid stage and engaged in craft and teamworking events with their parents. Leaders have threaded learning about healthy relationships and personal care through the curriculum.

Governors balance challenging and supporting leaders and staff. They are knowledgeable about the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They know exactly how well pupils are learning. Parents told inspectors that they are 'amazed' at how well their children are learning and developing. Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload.

## **Safeguarding**

Leaders and staff are acutely aware of the potential risks and dangers that pupils face. Stringent safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, which staff adhere to fully. Staff are expert at identifying potential signs of neglect and abuse. They record and report any concerns that they have about pupils immediately.

All staff are familiar with the latest government guidance on keeping pupils safe in education. Leaders regularly update staff on matters relating to pupils' safety and welfare. They also work with a wide range of external specialists to make sure that, when necessary, pupils receive the extra help that they need.

Throughout the curriculum, staff focus on helping pupils to understand safe and unsafe situations.

## **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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in May 2012.

## **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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106170
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211043
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Joan Pritchard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Samantha Benson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lisburneschool.stockport.sch.uk">www.lisburneschool.stockport.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school caters for primary-aged pupils. Most pupils have autism spectrum disorder and additional special needs, including language, speech and communication difficulties. Some pupils have complex physical and medical needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The main school is located on a campus which it shares with a mainstream primary school. A small number of pupils from this school have access to the mainstream school for some aspects of their learning. In addition, leaders make use of a small number of other external specialist schools and mainstream schools. All alternative providers are registered.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has almost doubled in size. Leaders have added two satellite centres. One centre caters for pupils with SEND who have a range of special needs. The other caters for children in the early years and a small number of pupils in Year 1, who also have a range of special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has reorganised and expanded the senior leadership team.
- At the time of the inspection, extra mobile classrooms were being added to the school campus to cater for an increasing number of pupils. The school was due to move to a

purpose-built campus close to the present site in September 2023. However, a fire delayed leaders' and governors' plans. Leaders have revised the timescale for the move, which they hope will be in September 2024.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. They also held meetings with other leaders, including those with responsibility for pupils' attendance and for pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development. The lead inspector met with members of the school's therapy team.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body. He spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector met with parents. He reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. They talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. They examined a range of policies and documents. They also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Holmes

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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