

Inspection of Samuel Laycock School

Broadoak Road, Ashton Under Lyne OL6 8RF

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

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

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to Samuel Laycock School. They help each other, feel safe and enjoy most of their activities.

Pupils work hard in lessons and try their best to do the tasks that teachers give to them.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful and polite. A few pupils find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Staff give them extra help to behave as well as they should. The pupils that we spoke to said that bullying is rare and that staff deal with it well.

Many pupils take part in breakfast clubs and after-school clubs. Staff help the pupils to be healthy and happy through these and other activities.

Over the last few years, teachers have not had high enough expectations of pupils. Pupils have not achieved as much as possible during their time at school. This is changing. Last year, Year 11 pupils did well in their entry-level and functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. That said, improvements to the curriculum are still very new. Pupils do not gain the knowledge and skills they should in a range of subjects.

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

Governors and leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some of the improvement plans that they have put in place are beginning to work. The quality of education that pupils receive is improving. However, there is more to do to ensure that pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

Senior leaders have made some important improvements to the curriculum. The curriculum for English and mathematics is well planned and teachers are developing the skills to teach it. For example, the mathematics curriculum has been redesigned, and in English, teachers have developed effective approaches to help pupils write more fluently. This is beginning to improve the quality of education in these subjects. In English and mathematics, teachers give pupils work that helps them to build on things that they know so that they can learn more.

In other subjects, improvements to the curriculum are at an earlier stage. Teachers do not have the skills to teach these subjects consistently well. This means that pupils are not learning as much as they should.

Leaders have developed systems to let them check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. This lets them help pupils who are falling behind and adjust the curriculum to help meet pupils' individual learning needs, as outlined in their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Teachers do not always use information from these checks on pupils' learning as well as possible. Sometimes, pupils are not

able to do their work because it is too difficult. At other times, the work is too easy. This slows some pupils' learning.

Pupils behave well in their lessons, during breaktimes and when they are arriving at or leaving the school. Staff work hard to develop good relationships with pupils. School leaders have systems in place to monitor pupils' behaviour. This means that they are able to support pupils to manage their own behaviour. This helps pupils to learn better. Governors and senior leaders have acted on the concerns of some staff about the challenging behaviour of a few pupils.

Pupils' attendance is improving. Leaders and staff work hard to help pupils improve their attendance. Parents and carers value the way the school helps their children.

Pupils are kind to one another. They have fun together and celebrate the differences between people. Pupils are confident in talking with adults and are proud of their achievements. Staff prepare pupils well for adult life and help them make the move to the next stage of their education.

Leaders listen to members of staff and involve them in decisions. Leaders are open to new ideas and look for different ways to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. This is evident among governors, leaders, staff and pupils. Pupils know whom to tell if they are worried. They explained how they have been taught to stay safe when working online. Members of staff know how to keep pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) safe. They understand the local issues that might make pupils in the school unsafe.

The school works with other professionals and families to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recent improvements to mathematics and English are making a difference to pupils' learning. However, in other subjects, leaders have only recently introduced a coherently planned and well-organised curriculum. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should in a range of subjects. Leaders should ensure that they implement the new curriculum plans fully. They should also check on how well the new plans are working to make sure that pupils can learn more and remember more.
- Some teachers do not have the skills or expertise to teach all aspects of the curriculum consistently well. This stops some pupils from learning as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that they provide appropriate training to the

teaching staff to ensure that they are well prepared to teach the planned curriculum.

- Teachers do not use information about pupils' learning well enough to help pupils build on what they already know and can do. This means that the tasks they receive are often too easy or too difficult. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the information available to better plan learning so that pupils can make the progress that they should through the planned curriculum.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	106280
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10121970
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carolyn Wright
Headteacher	Andrew Foord
Website	www.samuellaycock.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for secondary-aged pupils with moderate learning difficulties and for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The head of school was appointed in September 2018.
- In September 2019, pupil numbers rose from 144 to 170. This is a significant increase. As a result, governors and leaders have recruited a large group of new staff who have recently joined the school.

Information about this inspection

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

- During this inspection, we visited lessons, and spoke with pupils about their work and asked them what it is like to attend the school. We had discussions with governors, leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and members of support staff. We spoke with a representative of the local authority and members of staff at pupils' work experience placements.

- We reviewed documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school and their plans for improving the school. We looked at subject leaders' recently developed curriculum plans and records of staff's professional development.
- We examined a range of documents about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on members of staff and records of the process for recruiting staff.
- We read survey responses from pupils, parents and members of staff. We considered 18 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and read nine comments received through the free-text facility. We considered 40 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 34 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, humanities and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). During these activities, we talked to subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and met with pupils.

Inspection team

Martin Hanbury, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Iain Sim	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020