

# Inspection of Lower Pastures

Broadhead Road, Huddlesden, Nr Darwen BB3 3QP

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Inspection dates: 31 January and 1 February 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

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

Pupils are happy and safe at Lower Pastures School. They value the positive relationships that they have with staff. This helps them to enjoy their lessons. Pupils understand the importance of learning about a wide range of subjects. They want to go to school every day. Staff warmly welcome pupils into school every morning. This helps pupils to be well prepared for the school day.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils' behaviour and learning. The pupils, who all have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs. Leaders know that pupils have had varying experiences of education. They are passionate about enthusing and engaging pupils in learning. Pupils rise to the high expectations that leaders have of them. They are committed to their learning and try their best to regulate their behaviour. Leaders deal with rare incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a wide and rich variety of opportunities that extend beyond the academic curriculum. These opportunities are meaningful and purposeful. They help to broaden pupils' learning experiences. Pupils appreciate the trips and visits that leaders organise for them. For example, they have visited a war museum in Manchester, a range of theatres and the beach.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and broad. They have thought carefully about how the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. Leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils must learn. They have broken this knowledge down into smaller steps so that pupils can know more, do more and remember more. However, in some subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the order that essential knowledge is delivered. This means that some pupils do not always build knowledge in a logical way in these subjects.

In most subjects, teachers have the knowledge that they need to teach the curriculum well. They choose activities and resources that motivate and excite pupils. Teachers skilfully check pupils' prior knowledge and address errors and misconceptions before moving on to new learning. They carefully use assessment information to inform how they adapt the delivery of the curriculum. This helps pupils to fill any gaps they may have in their learning.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They have instilled a love of reading in pupils. Pupils read a wide range of texts in lessons. They also enjoy reading class books together. Pupils read widely and often in and out of school. Leaders ensure that pupils' reading is closely tracked and monitored. They identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge, including with comprehension and phonics knowledge. Staff deliver effective support to struggling readers. Pupils make strong gains in their reading knowledge. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers.

Staff help pupils to establish positive behaviours that allow them to learn well. Pupils try hard to focus and complete the activities that staff provide. Most of the time, pupils concentrate well. They have positive attitudes to their learning. This means that lessons are rarely disrupted by negative behaviour. Pupils have suitable strategies to help them to manage their feelings and emotions. They use these appropriately, allowing all pupils to learn well overall.

Leaders have designed a comprehensive personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education curriculum. Staff teach this thoughtfully and are sensitive to the needs of pupils. Pupils are well prepared to become independent and resilient members of society.

Staff teach pupils important skills for life, such as how to cook healthy meals and how to budget. They take pupils to visit places of worship, such as a mosque, synagogue and cathedral. Pupils learn how to be respectful and tolerant of other beliefs, faiths and cultures. Staff arrange many opportunities for pupils to be physically active and to develop their wider talents and interests. For example, pupils go skiing, bouldering and mountain biking. They also participate in yoga and swimming.

Leaders ensure that pupils are given impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance. However, leaders have not developed a fully cohesive careers programme to enable pupils to experience workplaces and to visit further and higher education settings. Pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for the next stages of their education, employment or training.

The proprietor has ensured that there is a system in place to support and challenge leaders about the quality of education that pupils receive. The proprietor has established an effective governing body. Governors have a wide and rich set of skills that help them to hold leaders to account for school improvement.

The proprietor has ensured that all of the independent school standards ('the standards') are met. Leaders have ensured that they follow health and safety requirements, including fire regulations and risk assessments. The classroom is bright, clean and well resourced. Policies are available to parents and carers on the website and upon request. The complaints policy is fully compliant. Leaders have ensured that the school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Leaders prioritise the well-being of staff. The staff team is very small in number and leaders are mindful of their workload. They take effective steps to reduce the workload of staff. Staff value the support of leaders and the support that they get from each other.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is an effective safeguarding policy that includes the current government requirements. The policy is published on the website and is available to parents on request.

Leaders have ensured that staff have the training that they need to identify the signs that pupils may be suffering from, or at risk of, harm. Leaders are aware of any additional safeguarding vulnerabilities of the school's pupils and ensure that staff are alert to these.

There is a wide range of in-house therapeutic support available to pupils, as well as access to other external agencies. Leaders have established a clear system for reporting and recording any concerns that staff may have about pupils' welfare. Leaders act on these swiftly.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. For example, leaders have worked with the police to deliver a workshop about knife crime, and pupils visited the knife angel.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In one or two subjects, leaders have not thought carefully about the order that essential knowledge should be delivered. This means that, in these subjects, some pupils do not build on prior learning as securely as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum design helps pupils to build knowledge in a logical way.
- Leaders have not ensured that there are enough opportunities for pupils to experience workplaces or to have encounters with employers and employees. Nor have they ensured that pupils have sufficient experiences of further and higher education settings. This means that pupils are not as well prepared for their next stages of education, employment or training as they should be. Leaders should ensure that pupils are provided with well-planned opportunities to learn about different careers, the workplace and further and higher education settings.

## 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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142531
<b>DfE registration number</b>	889/6014
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	10254676
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	3
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Sean Fitzpatrick
<b>Chair</b>	Matt Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Wood
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£38,140
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 706525
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.roachesschool.net">www.roachesschool.net</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:dwood@caretodayparallelpayers.net">dwood@caretodayparallelpayers.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 November 2018

## Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was on 13 and 14 November 2018.
- The school caters for pupils who are living at Lower Pastures Farm Children's Home.
- The school is part of the Roaches School Network.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no key stage 4 pupils at the school.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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 and also spoke with a range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors. The chair of governors is also a representative of the proprietor.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the independent school standards, the curriculum, school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. Inspectors also spoke to staff to check how well they understand safeguarding procedures.
- There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. However, the lead inspector spoke with parents and carers to gather their views.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. However, inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning and experiences in school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime, in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in history, mathematics and personal, social and health education. They met subject leaders and teachers and visited a sample of lessons. They also considered the curriculum across some other subject areas and looked at examples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents and information relating to the standards. She also toured the school premises.

### **Inspection team**

Sally Timmons, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mavis Smith

His Majesty's Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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