

# Inspection of a good school: Launchpad Centre

College Street, St Helens, Merseyside WA10 1UH

---

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2022

## **Outcome**

Launchpad Centre continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils learn to enjoy education when they join this school. They feel welcome, safe, valued and listened to by staff. Over time, pupils become resilient and develop their confidence and self-belief. Staff have high expectations. Pupils rise to these expectations and achieve well.

Staff know pupils extremely well. Teachers give pupils individual attention, which helps pupils to feel safe and supported in school. The strong, respectful relationships between pupils and staff are the foundation to the school's success.

Pupils' behaviour improves over time because they learn how to manage their emotions. When pupils do fall out, staff help them to understand and respect different opinions. Staff are quick to notice and intervene when a pupil needs extra help. Pupils are well supported by staff to talk, reflect and deal successfully with any problems or concerns. Pupils are confident that adults will resolve any incidents of bullying.

Leaders provide a range of exciting experiences for pupils. These include kayaking, climbing and outdoor education. Trips to theatres and museums bring classroom learning to life. Pupils appreciate the range of trips and visits that leaders plan for them.

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

The school has three separate centres on three sites to accommodate the different ages and needs of pupils. The curriculum is ambitious. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Subject leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and be able to do in their subjects. In some subjects, leaders have ensured that pupils' learning builds in well-ordered steps. However, in some other subjects, leaders have given less consideration to the order in which pupils' learning should develop, particularly where they move on from one centre to the next. Occasionally, this slows pupils' learning.

In lessons, pupils' interests are captured by the creative and thought-provoking activities that teachers provide. Teachers revisit important aspects of the curriculum to ensure that pupils secure their learning before moving on to new ideas. This ensures that pupils achieve well. However, teachers across the different centres have limited opportunities to share and learn from the expertise of their colleagues across the whole school.

When pupils join the school, leaders undertake a thorough check of their knowledge and understanding. This allows staff to know where pupils' strengths and difficulties lie. Pupils catch up quickly because staff design learning that helps pupils to fill any gaps in their knowledge. For example, pupils benefit from the careful support that they receive for their learning in reading, writing or mathematics. They gain confidence in their learning as staff encourage them to have a go, to learn from mistakes and to be creative in their thinking.

Pupils gain a range of nationally recognised qualifications. Pupils can participate in work experience and outdoor activities. Year 11 pupils said that they now feel ready and confident to make the move into further education. Some pupils move on to study apprenticeships, A levels, vocational courses and training. Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors were overwhelmingly happy with their children's achievements. A typical comment was, 'my child has exceeded all expectations'.

Where appropriate, pupils make a successful transition back into mainstream education. Senior leaders have strengthened their partnership with the local mainstream schools to improve this transition. Staff work together to ensure that any pupils reintegrating will have the right support around them so that they will continue to thrive.

There is little low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils also behave well around school. This is because staff understand and follow the school's behaviour policy. They are quick to intervene in any incidents. Pupils respond positively to the school's reward system. They strive to earn points that allow them to enjoy trips and rewards.

Leaders design the personal development curriculum carefully to prepare pupils well for their next steps. Pupils have opportunities to discuss and debate some challenging but important topics. They learn how to stay safe online and in the community. External agencies are frequent visitors to school, teaching important topics such as sexual health, respectful healthy relationships and first aid. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions and the importance of tolerance and respect.

Leaders are quick to identify any pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work with parents, mainstream schools and the local authority to ensure that these pupils achieve well and have their additional needs met by staff.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They feel listened to and said that leaders keep their work-life balance in mind when making decisions about the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture in school is strong. Staff know pupils well and are quick to notice any changes in behaviour or appearance that may indicate a cause for concern. Leaders have forged close links with the alternative provision to ensure that all safeguarding systems and procedures are robust and that pupils are safe. Leaders work closely with a number of external agencies, including the local authority, to ensure that the right support is in place for individual pupils and their families.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum raises pupils' awareness of safeguarding risks, where to get help and how to stay safe.

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

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

- In some subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils' learning develops in a logical sequence. Where this is the case, pupils' learning slows. Leaders should ensure that, in all subjects, the curriculum sets out how pupils should build their learning in well-ordered steps.
- Subject leaders and teachers have limited opportunities to share their expertise in delivering the curriculum. This means that the effective delivery of the curriculum in some parts of the school is not fully replicated across the other centres. Leaders should ensure that staff benefit from opportunities to learn from the expertise of others in order to further develop their success in implementing the curriculum.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

## **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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132033
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226109
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jeanette Devine
<b>Head of School</b>	Rachel Guyer
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.paceandlaunchpad.sthelens.gov.uk">www.paceandlaunchpad.sthelens.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has an executive headteacher who started at the school in May 2022.
- Leaders make use of four unregistered alternative providers.
- Pupil numbers have significantly increased since the previous inspection. A high number of pupils are on dual-roll with a mainstream school. They attend both their mainstream school and this school every week.

## 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 spoke with the head of school, the executive headteacher and other members of staff. Inspectors also spoke with members of the management committee, including the chair and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors

also evaluated the curriculum, visited lessons and spoke with leaders about other subjects.

- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that in relation to safeguarding and records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents and spoke with staff from pupils' mainstream schools.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors also visited two alternative providers and spoke with another by telephone.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Bather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Dawn Platt

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022