

Inspection of Laurus Cheadle Hulme

Cheadle Road, Cheadle SK8 5GB

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Laurus Cheadle Hulme is an exceptional place for pupils to learn in. The school's vision to be unashamedly ambitious, regardless of background or circumstance, is at the heart of every aspect of school life.

Leaders place no limits on what pupils can achieve. They challenge pupils to set aspirational goals and to work hard to achieve them. Pupils relish the chance to excel. They benefit from a knowledge-rich curriculum that prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education. They achieve highly.

Pupils behave in an impeccable manner. In lessons, they behave maturely and are academically curious. They ask questions, enjoy debate and take responsibility in their own learning. Classrooms are harmonious places where learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations of their work and behaviour. They always try their best. They feel safe from bullying and name-calling. When necessary, leaders take effective action to address any incidents of bullying and support pupils extremely well.

Pupils are very happy at school. They appreciate the vast array of academic, sporting, cultural and creative activities on offer which help them to nurture their wider interests. Leaders' commitment to developing pupils' character and personal values is very strong. Pupils value the importance of good manners, respect and kindness.

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

Leaders have designed a demanding and varied curriculum rooted in innovative research. Leaders prioritise early the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. For example, the vast majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), take Spanish GCSE at the end of Year 9. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve exceptionally well.

In every subject, leaders have established a clear vision of what pupils should learn, know and remember. They have ordered subject content that builds securely on earlier learning in a logical way. This helps pupils to build knowledge gradually over time. Consequently, they make strong connections with what they have learned before.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They are skilful in bringing lessons to life. Their explanations are logical and clear. They are adept at helping pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary well. Consequently, pupils are able to use high-level language and complex writing techniques across the subjects that they study. For example, in history, they teach pupils how to think and write like a historian. They select effective activities that help pupils gain and remember the most important knowledge. This helps pupils to be continually ready for the next step in their learning.

Subject leaders use highly effective research-based assessment techniques to check pupils' understanding. Teachers identify accurately the precise knowledge that pupils know and remember. This means that they can address any forgotten learning and make sure that pupils are secure in what they have learned previously before moving on. They often provide feedback directly to pupils in lessons so that they can correct any misunderstandings immediately. This is especially true for pupils with SEND and for disadvantaged pupils, who make substantial gains in knowledge over time.

A deep-rooted culture of reading permeates the school. Pupils have regular opportunities for reading through an extensive reading curriculum. They benefit extensively from reading activities beyond the classroom, such as book clubs, library lessons and author visits. Teachers of all subjects promote a love of reading consistently well. Staff are quick to identify pupils who find reading more difficult. Effective programmes of support help pupils to catch up with their peers.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest opportunity. They supply detailed information to staff about pupils' individual needs. Teachers use this information to adapt successfully the teaching of the same ambitious curriculum. Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils thrive.

In lessons and around the school, pupils' behaviour and personal conduct are excellent. The impact of their strong relationships with staff is evident in all aspects of school life. They manage their own behaviour well and are highly self-motivated to work independently with focus and resilience. Consequently, classrooms are calm, orderly and disruption-free.

Leaders have designed abundant opportunities for pupils to become well-rounded citizens and to be well prepared for life growing up in modern Britain. Teachers cultivate pupils' learning through a beliefs and values programme. Pupils learn about other cultures, faiths and perspectives. They put into practice important learning about equality, diversity and tolerance. Pupils at Laurus Cheadle Hulme celebrate difference and what it is to be unique.

Pupils benefit from an extensive careers programme that informs them well how to make decisions about their next steps. They receive high-quality careers advice. They know about the courses and jobs that they can secure after school. They are ambitious in their next steps, because staff, college visits and careers advisers have inspired them to achieve their goals.

Since the school opened five years ago, the number of staff has grown considerably. Trust and school leaders have fostered a truly collaborative environment where they prioritise professional development and staff well-being. Staff love working at the school. They feel that leaders value them.

Trustees and governors support leaders well and work closely with them to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils. They work hand in hand with leaders in all aspects of school life to develop the school further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff at all levels are alert to the safeguarding risks pupils may face. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training so that they can spot the signs of neglect or abuse. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare.

Leaders monitor individual safeguarding cases diligently. They take timely and effective action when necessary. They are proactive in their approach and work persistently with external agencies to ensure that the right support is in place for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe, including when online, and to understand what is right or wrong in a relationship. They also provide them with age-appropriate knowledge about sexual harassment. They are aware of who to approach if they have any worries or anxieties.

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	145893
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10244622
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,069
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the Academy Committee	Charles Nevin
Chief executive officer	Linda Magrath
Head of School	John Peet
Website	www.lauruschadlehulme.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Laurus Cheadle Hulme opened in September 2018 and is part of The Laurus Trust.
- Leaders use alternative provision for a small number of pupils at one unregistered alternative provider and two registered alternative providers.
- 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

The 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, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. They spoke with members of the trust and members of the local academy committee. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of academy committee meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, mathematics, physical education, modern foreign languages and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paula Crawley	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector

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