

# Inspection of Samuel Laycock School

Broad oak Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL6 8RF

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Helen Wilson. This school is part of New Bridge multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Clare John, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Williams.

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

Samuel Laycock School has high expectations for pupils' personal and academic achievement. These expectations are fully realised. The school harnesses and nurtures pupils' talents and interests. For example, in performing arts, pupils find their voice and the confidence to perform. In sports, pupils develop leadership skills and use these skills to coach others. Lunch clubs, after school clubs and residential activities stretch and challenge pupils to try something new.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their trips abroad, the school choir and their love of the outdoors. In Year 11, pupils stay in a self-catering caravan by the sea. They shop and cook their own food. They also plan their activities. This experience further develops their independence and readiness for leaving school.

Pupils feel that they are treated equally in their school. They respect and look after each other. Pupils in Year 7 have an older 'buddy' who helps them to settle into their new school. Some pupils have had specialist training to help them to listen and chat to other pupils who may have emotional, relationship or friendship worries. Pupils feel safe in school and have trusted adults who they can talk to.

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

The school has ensured that the curriculum meets the wide range of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the school. Vocational pathways in key stage 4 give pupils the knowledge, skills and qualifications that they need to progress successfully into post-16 training, work or education. The curriculum is sequenced well to allow pupils to build knowledge securely over time.

The curriculum has been further refined to better meet the needs of pupils with more complex SEND. Additional pathways for pupils with sensory and communication needs have been established. Although this change has had a positive start, it is too soon to measure the impact. There is more work to do to ensure that these pupils achieve highly.

Teachers have expert knowledge. They know pupils extremely well. They use this information to both identify and meet pupils' needs. They select activities that will engage pupils and allow them to build on what they already know.

Staff use a range of strategies well to check if pupils have learned what was intended. They also use this information to plan the next steps for pupils. Staff are quick to pick up on any errors. Through praise and encouragement, pupils stay motivated as learners.

There is a strong culture of reading in school. Pupils read a wide range of texts including fiction, non-fiction, plays and poetry. Pupils discuss the characters and themes. They also use discussion, song, sign and symbols to help them to draft their own unique writing. This also helps pupils to remember the key vocabulary. The school identifies pupils who need additional support with their reading. A range of programmes, including phonics,

technology, one-to-one and small group work, are highly effective in giving pupils the knowledge that they need to become confident, fluent readers.

The school is calm and supportive. It helps pupils to learn to manage their emotions and behaviour. The school promotes high attendance. A range of strategies have been successful in helping pupils to attend well.

Independence and living skills are well embedded within the curriculum. Pupils learn how to look after themselves. This includes cooking, budgeting, shopping, cleaning and using public transport. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and can discuss sensitive topics with maturity and respect.

A well-considered careers programme allows pupils to learn about different careers and the opportunities that are available for them in the future. The school has a bespoke work-experience programme. For example, pupils work in garden centres, a football museum and a theatre.

The trust has breathed new life into the school. It, along with the governing body, has allowed the school the autonomy and trust to thrive, while ensuring that the school has extended support and challenge. Staff morale is high. The school has taken steps to prioritise staff's workload. Everyone is pulling together to improve outcomes for all pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some aspects of the curriculum are in the early stages of implementation. In these areas, some pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. The school should ensure that the curriculum is well-embedded to ensure that pupils achieve highly across all areas.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148936
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348388
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 17
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Steve Williams
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Clare John
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Wilson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.samuellaycockschool.org">www.samuellaycockschool.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the New Bridge Multi Academy Trust in April 2022.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech, language and communication needs, autistic spectrum disorder, social, emotional and mental health needs, physical disability, moderate learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior school leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors spoke to the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the chair and vice-chair of trustees and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. An inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, sport and outdoor learning, food technology, digital and information and communication technology, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a sample of lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including policies and analysis of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lunch and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors also considered the views of parents and carers expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

## Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Simpson	Ofsted Inspector

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