

Inspection of The Lowry Academy

Hilton Lane, Little Hulton, Worsley, Manchester M28 0SY

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Claire Coy. This school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dame Reena Keeble.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils joining the school, whether in Year 7 or at other times, quickly settle in. There are clear and well-adopted routines for how pupils should learn and behave. These help most pupils to feel happy in school. Most pupils work hard to keep up with teachers' ambitious learning goals. They enjoy receiving rewards and badges in recognition of their efforts.

In the past, due to weaknesses in the quality of education provided by the school, pupils did not achieve as well as they should. This is reflected in the published outcomes for the school in 2023. The school has worked systematically to address these weaknesses. Older pupils appreciate the positive transformation that has taken place during their time at school. Pupils who attend school regularly now learn and achieve well.

Pupils develop their talents and interests from accessing a broad offer of clubs and activities. These include coding and cooking clubs and a 'knit and natter' group. An assortment of sports, such as badminton, basketball and football, are offered to different year groups so that everyone can participate in physical activity. Pupils enjoy opportunities to perform, including in musical productions and the school's rock and jazz bands.

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

The trust has supported the school to develop a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum. This is exemplified by the rapidly increasing number of pupils choosing to study the EBacc suite of subjects. Most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are now developing the knowledge that they need to achieve well.

The school ensures that teachers know what pupils should learn and when. Teachers are trained in a consistent and effective approach to deliver curriculum content. They value the availability of high-quality resources and frequent opportunities for collaboration that help to reduce their workload.

Teachers regularly work together to evaluate the impact of recent lessons on pupils' learning. This helps them to recognise and address any misconceptions that pupils develop. Typically, teachers check that pupils can remember their learning over time. However, at times, these checks are not as effective as they should be in identifying learning that pupils have forgotten. This hampers teachers' efforts to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school has strengthened its processes to identify pupils with SEND. Staff make sensitive adaptations that enable these pupils to progress through the curriculum. The school quickly identifies pupils who struggle with their reading and provides targeted support that helps these pupils to increase their reading expertise.

Classrooms are typically calm and purposeful environments that match the school's intention for 'disruption-free learning'. The school supports pupils who find it difficult to comply with behaviour expectations. This work has brought about a meaningful reduction in the number and severity of behaviour incidents.

Most pupils understand the importance of attending school each day. Staff systematically review attendance information. They identify and support pupils whose attendance is lower than it should be. Despite this, too many pupils are persistently absent from school. These pupils miss valuable learning which prevents them from achieving all that they should.

The school has developed a personal, social and health education programme to inform pupils about a great variety of topics, including healthy relationships, finance and the law. However, the time devoted to this programme for older pupils, particularly those in Year 11, is limited. This hinders the breadth and depth of older pupils' learning.

The school is committed to raising pupils' aspirations. It provides pupils with a wide range of useful careers information over their time at the academy. Skilled staff support pupils to make well-informed choices regarding their next steps.

The trust has been instrumental in supporting the school to bring about the many required changes. Clear accountability structures ensure that trustees and local governors share and act upon information about the school's progress towards ambitious improvement goals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From time to time, teachers do not check pupils' prior learning as carefully as they should. This means that they are unaware of gaps in some pupils' knowledge that persist over time. The school should ensure that teachers rapidly identify and address forgotten learning so that pupils learn all that they should.
- Some pupils do not attend school with sufficient regularity. As a result, they miss out on important learning which hinders their achievement. The school should continue to strengthen its efforts to identify and tackle barriers to pupils' attendance, in order to reduce levels of pupil absence.
- Pupils in key stage 4 have limited time devoted to personal, social and health education. This impedes their ability to develop a broad and deep understanding of these topics. The school should ensure that older pupils have the time that they need to develop and embed this important knowledge.

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

Unique reference number	148393
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10294424
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	894
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dame Reena Keeble
CEO of trust	Sir Jon Coles
Principal	Claire Coy
Website	www.lowryacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Lowry Academy converted to become an academy in March 2021. When its predecessor school, Harrop Fold School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is part of the United Learning Trust.
- The school's leadership team, including the principal, have all been appointed since the last inspection of the predecessor school. Many of the school's staff have also been appointed since this time.
- 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.
- The school uses alternative provision for a minority of pupils. This includes two registered and four unregistered providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the principal, and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local governing body and the trust board, including the chair of the trust and the CEO.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also reviewed records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, science and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gil Bourgade	Ofsted Inspector
Niamh Howlett	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Long	Ofsted Inspector

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