

Inspection of Longdendale High School

Spring Street, Hyde SK14 8LW

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Michael Chiles. This school is part of The Stamford Park 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), Anton McGrath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Foote.

What is it like to attend this school

Since the last inspection, pupils are benefiting from considerable improvements to the quality of education that they receive. Strong and determined leadership has driven positive change and the school's standards are starting to rise. Despite this, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The school wants every pupil to do well in their studies. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy a rich, diverse curriculum that covers many subjects. However, weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum prevent some pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, from reaching their full potential.

Pupils feel happy and safe at school. They know how they should behave. Most pupils meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. They typically display the values of 'respect, resilience and aspiration' in class and around school to build their Longdendale legacy. Pupils said that they benefit from the new rewards system. It encourages them to come to school and motivates them to do well.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn to stay safe, to understand what constitutes healthy relationships, and to appreciate diversity. Pupils can participate in many clubs and activities, including criminology, darts, football, cake design and musical performances.

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

The school has overhauled the curriculum. It has carefully considered what pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn it. The curriculum is designed well so that learning can flow smoothly across all key stages. This approach is making it easier for pupils to build successfully on their prior knowledge. However, while these improvements are benefiting current pupils at the school, they are not reflected in the published 2024 key stage 4 data.

The school has ensured that teachers have strong subject knowledge. Many teachers design effective learning and check for gaps in pupils' understanding. This is helping to deepen pupils' knowledge and progress. However, some teachers are still developing the necessary expertise to deliver their subject curriculums well. This uneven curriculum delivery hinders some pupils from learning all that they should.

The school has strong processes in place for accurately identifying pupils' additional needs. Increasingly, the school is providing teachers and support staff with quality information about each individual pupil's needs. However, this work is in its infancy. While the school has developed a clear strategy to improve its SEND offer, it is too early to see the full impact of this work. This, coupled with weaknesses in the curriculum delivery, means that some pupils with SEND do not progress as well as they should through the curriculum.

The school has overhauled its approaches to helping pupils who struggle with reading. Staff identify gaps in most pupils' reading knowledge. Many pupils receive helpful support to improve their reading fluency. However, this renewed approach has not benefited some older pupils. This affects how well these pupils engage with the curriculum and hampers their learning.

Pupils behave well in class and around school. The school successfully resolves any behaviour issues when they arise. It has also taken effective action, through the use of well-thought-out strategies, to help pupils to attend school regularly and on time. Close collaboration with families is helping more pupils, particularly pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged, to attend on a regular basis. As a result, attendance is close to the national average. Pupils and staff welcome these improvements.

The school has a well-designed careers programme. Pupils learn about various career and educational opportunities. Trips and guest speakers connect pupils with local and national employers. Pupils successfully transition to high-quality destinations after leaving the school.

The school is on a rapid improvement journey and remains ambitious for pupils' success. Trust leaders, the local governing body, and senior leaders know what needs to change. They ensure that staff receive quality training and effective professional development to support improvement priorities. Staff like working at this school. They shared with inspectors that leaders fully consider their workload and well-being when making decisions about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the delivery of the curriculum is uneven. This affects how well some pupils learn. The school should ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to deliver the curriculum consistently well.
- The implementation of the school's revised SEND offer is in its early stages. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not get the full support that they need to be successful. The school should ensure that staff understand how to implement the revised SEND offer effectively.
- Some older pupils have not benefited from the school's renewed approach to addressing gaps in reading knowledge. This impacts how well these pupils access the wider curriculum and hinders their success in lessons. The school should ensure that the gaps in these pupils' reading knowledge are identified and remedied swiftly.

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	148431
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10378031
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	789
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Foote
CEO of the trust	Anton McGrath
Headteacher	Michael Chiles
Website	www.longdendalehighschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 February 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Stamford Park Trust.
- 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 three registered and four unregistered providers of alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and some trustees, including the chair of the trust. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and drama. 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 considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the minutes of governors' meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance and they reviewed samples of documentation relating to pupils with SEND.
- 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.

Inspection team

Kevin Sexton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Long	Ofsted Inspector
Eleanor Overland	Ofsted Inspector

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