

Inspection of a good school: St Laurence School

Ashley Road, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1DZ

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2022

Outcome

St Laurence School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending St Laurence School. Leaders have high expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils say this helps them to learn. Leaders plan carefully for pupils' learning as they move through each stage at the school. This means pupils are well prepared for each stage of their learning.

Pupils feel safe in school and behave well. They say that bullying does sometimes happen, but that staff are good at dealing with it. A team of well-trained staff promote pupils' well-being and mental health. Pupils recognise this and feel well supported by them. The school's tutor groups include pupils from every year group from Years 7 to 13. Pupils value this system. It helps them to learn from and with pupils of different ages.

Students in the sixth form feel academically challenged and well supported. They are very engaged in the wider life of the school. For example, sixth-form students provide support for younger pupils.

Leaders prioritise pupils' wider development. In particular, 'learning outside the classroom' is a part of the wider curriculum. For example, over a hundred pupils complete the Duke of Edinburgh award programme each year. Staff lead many different activities during and beyond the school day. These are very well attended by pupils.

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

Leaders have created a curriculum that is well structured. It is broad and academic. For example, in English, a wide range of texts are taught. In history, the curriculum considers a range of historians. Leaders focus on building important vocabulary across the curriculum to develop pupils' language. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They check what pupils have learned and identify any misunderstandings. This helps pupils to know what they need to do next.

Teachers help pupils to learn the curriculum. In a minority of subjects, the curriculum is less developed. Leaders have not identified the knowledge they want pupils to know. This means there are times when pupils do not easily recall what they have learned.

An ambitious curriculum in the sixth form motivates students to work hard and succeed. Leaders have devised an effective core programme. For example, regular lectures cover a range of topics that promote students' personal development well.

Staff receive detailed information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This allows staff to plan carefully and provide adaptation when needed. As a result, pupils with SEND are well supported.

The number of pupils taking a language at key stage 4 has reduced since the pandemic. However, leaders are now encouraging pupils to take up the full range of subjects in the English Baccalaureate, including studying a language.

Leaders have planned a systematic approach to support pupils in the early stages of reading. For example, they use a taught phonics programme. Leaders create a culture where pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. These approaches are helping pupils to improve their reading and catch up with their peers.

Pupil leadership is a priority in the school. For example, as sports leaders or bullying ambassadors. As a faith school, pupils' spiritual development is well considered. Time for reflection is a part of the tutor programme. Pupils' behaviour within and beyond classrooms is orderly and polite. They conduct themselves well at social times. Consequently, lessons are calm and pupils take pride in their work.

The school has a well-developed careers programme. This forms an important aspect of the school's personal development curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Governors know the school well. They are ambitious for its future. They hold leaders to account and are aware of their responsibilities. Staff speak positively about leaders' support for their well-being. Staff say the school is a happy place to work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained and vigilant. Leaders ensure the reporting system ensures prompt communication. As a result, staff identify safeguarding issues quickly.

Leaders have good working relationships with their safeguarding partners. This means vulnerable pupils and their families get the help they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. This helps pupils to be aware of risks.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not retain the depth and range of knowledge they have been taught well enough. As a result, some pupils do not learn as much as they could. Leaders should help teachers to develop strategies that enable pupils to know more and remember more.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

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	137057
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10247337
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1402
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Ingrid Maher-Roberts
Headteacher	Tim Farrer
Website	www.st-laurence.com
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school is a stand-alone academy trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school has a religious character. It is a Church of England school. Its most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in March 2022 when the school's work was graded as 'excellent in all areas'.

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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met

with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors examined the school's arrangements for safeguarding by meeting with the designated lead for safeguarding. They also scrutinised policies, procedures and record-keeping and reviewed the safeguarding checks made on staff when they are recruited.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils around the school site and held meetings with boys, girls, and a mixed group of pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management, exclusions and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Wring	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Ingram	Ofsted Inspector

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