



Lakelands Academy

Address: Oswestry Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire, SY12 0EA

Unique reference number (URN): 139102

Inspection report: 9 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Typically, pupils in key stage 4 achieve well in national examinations across a range of subjects. Furthermore, disadvantaged pupils achieve at a level in line with their peers nationally. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make suitable progress from their starting points. They develop the knowledge and skills they need to be well prepared for their next steps. Pupils who attend the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND develop the skills they need to be successful. These pupils progress on to appropriate education and training.

Generally, pupils' responses in lessons and the work they produce show a secure understanding of the curriculum. Pupils who need extra help to develop their reading fluency get effective support. Pupils gain the important reading, writing and mathematical knowledge they need to access the curriculum.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have ensured that a broad and ambitious curriculum is in place. They have set out how they want teachers to deliver the curriculum. Typically, the curriculum is taught well. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum. They explain new learning clearly and check pupils' understanding well to address gaps in learning and misconceptions. However, at times, the curriculum is not delivered as well as it could be in some subjects. For example, tasks are not always appropriate for supporting pupils in learning the intended curriculum. Teachers are aware of pupils' needs. Generally, they make appropriate adaptations in lessons to support pupils.

The curriculum in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well matched to pupils' needs. Staff in this provision deliver the curriculum effectively and ensure that barriers to learning are addressed. They make highly effective adaptations to their teaching so that these pupils can fully access the curriculum.

Leaders are aware of the pupils who need support with reading, writing and number facts. These pupils get extra support so they have the important knowledge they need to access the curriculum.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders swiftly and effectively identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have high ambitions for these pupils and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders carefully consider the barriers to learning these pupils face. They ensure that they get extra help with their reading, writing and numeracy when needed. Leaders ensure that staff receive clear information about pupils' needs and the strategies they can use to support pupils in accessing the curriculum. In most lessons, staff use this

information to support pupils with SEND in accessing the curriculum. However, this is not done consistently well in all lessons.

Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND are very well supported. Leaders work well with other agencies, parents and carers to ensure that they understand the needs of these pupils. Staff in the provision have a very detailed understanding of pupils' needs, and they use highly effective strategies to address barriers to learning.

Leaders use the additional funding to effectively support disadvantaged pupils. This has had an impact. For example, disadvantaged pupils' attendance and achievement in external examinations at key stage 4 have improved. Leaders use alternative provision appropriately and in the best interests of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard ●

Leaders and those responsible for governance generally have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors and trustees know the school well. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively and provide appropriate support and challenge. The school has recently joined the 3-18 Education Trust. Trust leaders have ensured that they have a well-informed view of the school and are providing effective support and training opportunities.

Leaders want the best for all pupils and have developed an inclusive culture in the school. They consistently make decisions that put pupils' needs first, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders' actions have improved pupils' achievement and attendance. Leaders are aware that there is more work to do to improve behaviour. They are working with a small group of pupils who are causing most of the issues in lessons. However, the impact of their work has not yet led to notable improvements in these pupils' behaviour.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel it is well-led and managed. They appreciate that leaders take their workload and wellbeing into account. Staff take part in professional learning opportunities that help them to improve how they carry out their duties. Teachers at the start of their careers get appropriate support and training. Most parents and carers are positive about the school, although some have concerns about poor behaviour in some lessons.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard ●

The school has developed an effective personal development programme. The personal, social and health education curriculum is logically sequenced. Pupils learn about healthy eating, the dangers of substance abuse, online safety and how to be safe in the community. They learn right from wrong and how to manage their emotions. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and consent. Pupils develop their understanding of fundamental British values and equality. For example, pupils learn about democracy and voting by electing 'school senators'. Staff know pupils well, and show a commitment to their welfare. Pupils can access support for their wellbeing through the wellbeing team and pastoral staff.

Pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) learn about how to manage their emotions, develop friendships and how to communicate effectively. This helps them to develop their social skills.

Pupils learn how to contribute positively to society through charity fundraising events and taking part in community events. Furthermore, some pupils take on leadership roles and represent other pupils' views through the school's senate.

The school has increased the number of opportunities for pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, to develop their talents and interests. Pupils can take part in a range of clubs. Leaders are starting to track pupils' participation in these so that more pupils benefit from these opportunities. Pupils also enjoy trips that enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils have visited amusement parks, the beach, a safari park and art exhibitions.

There is a well-planned careers programme in place. Pupils learn about different careers, take part in work experience and have independent advice and guidance. This supports pupils in making informed choices about their next steps.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Leaders' efforts to improve pupils' attendance have been highly effective. They have a detailed understanding of the issues some pupils face in attending regularly. Staff provide effective support for these pupils. As a result, pupils' attendance is above national averages. Furthermore, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged, have high attendance.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are inconsistent. In some lessons, pupils behave and work well. They show positive attitudes to their learning. However, too many lessons are disrupted by behaviour issues. Some pupils do not complete work in lessons. Leaders have implemented a clear behaviour policy that staff and pupils understand. However, this is not always used well by staff, and has not yet led to improvements in pupils' behaviour. Leaders are aware that a small number of pupils are repeatedly causing issues in lessons. They have identified these pupils and are providing support to improve their behaviour. This is yet to have a notable impact. When bullying occurs, it is addressed. Some pupils hear other pupils use offensive language. Leaders deal with this when it is reported to them. Typically, pupils behave and socialise well at unstructured times.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils have a mixed experience at this school. Some pupils enjoy their learning and time at school. However, a significant minority of pupils do not. They say other pupils' behaviour disrupts their lessons. They say that staff are not always consistent when dealing with

conduct issues. Generally, there are positive relationships between staff and pupils. In lessons, some pupils do not have a positive attitude to learning and do not complete work to a high enough standard. Most pupils behave well at break and lunchtimes. They socialise well together. Some pupils report that other pupils can be disrespectful toward one another. Staff typically deal with these issues effectively. When bullying occurs, it is addressed. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attend school well.

Typically, the curriculum is taught effectively. Staff understand the barriers to learning that pupils have and typically address these well. On the whole, at key stage 4, pupils achieve in line with other pupils nationally, including disadvantaged pupils. They are well prepared for their next steps. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND get high-quality teaching that meets their needs. Staff know these pupils' needs very well and are effective at addressing barriers to learning. They progress well from their starting points.

There is a range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to take part in. More pupils are taking part in these than previously. Pupils enjoy taking part in the chess club, debating, choir and sports clubs. Some pupils also take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Some pupils are proud to take on leadership roles such as school 'senators', wellbeing ambassadors and reading buddies.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the interventions they use with the small minority of pupils who disrupt lessons lead to improved behaviour for these pupils.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning so that they complete work to the best of their ability.
- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently well across all subjects by ensuring that staff effectively implement the school's agreed approach to curriculum delivery.

About this inspection

This school is part of The 3-18 Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, David O'Toole, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gary Turner.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, trust leaders and those responsible for governance.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school joined The 3-18 Education Trust in June 2026.

The school currently makes use of 2 unregistered and 1 registered alternative provision.

The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. 27 pupils attend this provision; they all have an education, health and care plan.

Headteacher: Mark Hignett

Lead inspector:

Paul Halcro, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Martin Spoor, Ofsted Inspector

David Hermitt, Ofsted Inspector

Ed Leighton, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 9 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

581

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

580

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

21.86%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

7.23%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.46%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	34.0%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	29.2%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.9%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	43.1	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.3	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	41.6	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.63	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.36	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	30.0%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	27.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	16.7%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	35.5	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	31.1	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.9	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.63	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.96	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	30.0%	53.1%	-23.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	27.3%	53.1%	-25.9 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	16.7%	52.4%	-35.8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	35.5	50.4	-14.9
2023/24 (final)	31.1	50.0	-19.0
2022/23 (final)	32.9	50.3	-17.4

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.63	0.16	-0.80
2022/23 (final)	-0.96	0.17	-1.12

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	84%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	87%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	87%	94%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.4%	8.4%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	8.2%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	20.4%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	22.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	24.9%	26.5%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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