

Inspection of Langham Oaks

School Road, Langham, Colchester, Essex CO4 5PA

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Alan Wells. This school is part of the SEAX Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ruth Sturdy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sally Lockyer.

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils join the school after facing significant disruption to their education and lives. Some pupils have not attended school regularly prior to joining the school. Staff take time to understand pupils' often complex backgrounds and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They help pupils settle well into a stable school life. Staff celebrate important small successes, so pupils build pride and confidence in their own abilities.

Clear behaviour routines provide high expectations and consistency for pupils. Pupils alter their behaviour and know what is acceptable in their community. Pupils learn from their mistakes. They have high regard for the staff that care for them. Pupils build important social skills and form firm friendships with others. When incidents such as racism happen, pupils know the serious consequences. These incidents are rarely repeated.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and 'outdoor' curriculum supports pupils well in building life skills. Pupils learn to cook healthy meals. Important lessons around risk support pupils to make safe choices. Pupils enjoy sports. This helps them to keep fit and healthy. Opportunities such as sailing, 'coastal school' and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme take pupils beyond their day-to-day lives and prepare them well for 'life after Langham'.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school and trust have improved the curriculum. All pupils access a range of curriculum subjects through three bespoke 'pathways'. Each subject is broken down into helpful building blocks that support pupils to grow their understanding. The curriculum is adapted well around the accurately identified needs of the pupils. The life skills curriculum, for instance, equips pupils with the tools to build effectively on their social and emotional knowledge.

Many pupils have gaps in their learning prior to starting the school. High-quality checks on what pupils already know support the school to know the help pupils need in class. Staff know the pupils well and so choose effective methods to engage pupils with their work. As pupils progress through the school, they achieve success and access important qualifications that help them access colleges and other destinations.

The curriculum contains a variety of opportunities for pupils to read a growing range of books. Regular exposure to different texts helps pupils build their vocabulary knowledge. Staff quickly spot any pupil who finds reading difficult. Targeted, effective support helps pupils to catch up and improve their reading knowledge.

Alongside the curriculum, pupils access a range of high-quality pastoral support and therapy. This matches closely to pupils' varied and complex SEND needs. Staff give pupils the tools to deal with their emotions and feelings. Pupils know how to self-regulate their behaviour so they can remain focused on their learning.

The improved approach to dealing with behaviour is working well. The number of suspensions and serious incidents continues to reduce. Most staff know the 'scripts' and

techniques to de-escalate any challenging behaviour. The school's actions have a marked effect on improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. There are rare occasions, however, where a small number of staff do not use the techniques as well as they should. This affects how well pupils' behaviour is supported.

Prior to starting in the school, some pupils had significantly low attendance. The school works determinedly with a range of agencies to get pupils to attend school regularly. As a result, many pupils now attend school more often than they did. Despite this, a small number of pupils are still missing out on their education.

The PSHE curriculum is adapted around the changing needs and risks pupils experience effectively. Pupils know how to keep safe online and in the community. A well-planned careers programme enables pupils to learn about the options available to them when they leave the school.

Staff and the trust put the pupils at the centre of their work. They work together to break down the barriers pupils face and give pupils the necessary care and support they need.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of staff have not got to grips with the school's approach to supporting pupils with their behaviour. This means, on occasion, pupils take longer to regulate their behaviour. The school should ensure all staff have the necessary support to implement the school's behaviour strategies consistently well.
- A small number of pupils are still absent from the school too often. They are missing out on the good education and experiences the school is offering. The school should continue to work closely with the families and other agencies to support pupils to return to school and improve their attendance.

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	141512
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10323746
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	10 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sally Lockyer
CEO of the trust	Ruth Sturdy
Headteacher	Alan Wells
Website	www.langhamoaks.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Langham Oaks is a special school for boys aged 10 to 16 that caters for pupils with SEND related to social, emotional and mental health.
- Many pupils have faced significant disruption to their education prior to joining the school.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2023.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school has residential provision for a small number of pupils.
- The residential provision was last inspected in November 2023.
- 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 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Due to the nature of the specialist curriculum, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following areas; English, mathematics, food technology and PSHE (through the school's life skills curriculum). In each area, inspectors met with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at pupils' folders of achievement.
- The lead inspector reviewed how the school supports pupils to learn to read.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in additional subjects: outdoor learning, geography and history.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils on both days of inspection. Inspectors spent time with pupils at lunchtimes and breaktimes to observe behaviour and speak to pupils about school life.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- The lead inspector held telephone calls with the local authority and the school's effectiveness partners.
- 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 a range of staff over both days of inspection and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The lead inspector considered the 14 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Pope

Ofsted Inspector

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