

# Inspection of Aurora Brooklands School

159 Longmeanygate, Midge Hall, Leyland, Lancashire PR26 7TB

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Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2025

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel unconditionally accepted and valued at this school. Strong relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel safe and happy.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Pupils who attend this school have had a disjointed educational experience prior to arriving here. Many have gaps in their learning. The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is tailored to their needs and interests. This helps pupils rebuild confidence. Over time, pupils work towards a range of academic and vocational qualifications. They achieve well and are proud of their accomplishments.

Staff take time to understand pupils' individual needs. This helps pupils to put any previous difficulties behind them. Over time, they become respectful, confident young people who encourage each other to succeed. They demonstrate interest and curiosity in the world around them and form positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of activities offered by the school to enrich their learning. For example, they go on twice-yearly residential visits to the Aurora winter and summer games. Here, they participate in activities alongside peers from other schools across England. This helps pupils to build confidence and broaden their horizons.

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

The proprietor and school have the skills and expertise needed to fulfil their statutory duties. They have ensured that the independent school standards (the standards) are consistently met, including compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Pupils have a range of secure, well-resourced areas to play outside in. They are well supervised throughout the school day with high staff ratios. The proprietor holds the school to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been strengthened. Pupils benefit from an ambitious, well-ordered curriculum that is adapted to meet their individual needs. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school.

Staff receive relevant professional development. Typically, this helps them use appropriate skills and resources to help pupils learn well. Occasionally though, the school has not ensured that staff have the expertise to deliver the curriculum well or as intended. At times, there is deviation from the curriculum plans that are set out. This hinders pupils from learning as much as they could.

Mostly, staff successfully check that pupils understand the content they are delivering. However, when the curriculum is not delivered as intended, gaps in

pupils' knowledge are not identified consistently well. This means that pupils do not build new knowledge securely on what they already know and can do.

The school identifies pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Pupils often arrive with these already identified. The school works with a range of other professionals to develop individualised transition plans to help pupils settle in. Personalised learning approaches enable pupils to progress through the curriculum well.

The school prioritises teaching reading. Staff act swiftly to identify and support any pupils who find reading difficult. However, the school has not made sure that all staff have the expertise to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Consequently, there is variation in how well pupils learn. Many pupils have developed a negative opinion about reading due to their disrupted previous education. The school strives to improve pupils' perception of reading quickly. As a result, pupils talk confidently about their favourite books and authors.

The school has reformed its approach to behaviour in recent years. It has established firm boundaries. Its practice is underpinned by strong relationships and unconditional acceptance. Pupils are respectful and well mannered. They engage well with staff in lessons and at breaktimes. The school places great importance on pupils' mental well-being. Staff understand enhanced communication methods and the emotional needs that drive behaviour. This helps staff resolve any incidents of disruption effectively. With the help of staff, pupils demonstrate impressive resilience in overcoming past challenges and focusing on their learning and their futures. The school works closely with parents and carers to prioritise attendance. The rigorous systems in place to monitor attendance rates have helped create an upward trend over time.

The school provides helpful and impartial careers advice and guidance to pupils. Pupils are introduced to a range of suitable career options. They are supported in accessing work experience and learning opportunities with partner companies.

Pupils' personal development is carefully thought out by the school. Themed events, such as music week and neurodiversity week, enable pupils to explore new opportunities. Lunchtime activities are tailored to pupils' interests. For example, they attend clubs based on their favourite games and sports. Pupils' opinions and ideas are encouraged and nurtured. They take on leadership roles in the school such as student leaders or peer mentors. These opportunities enrich pupils' learning and broaden their horizons.

The proprietor supports the school on a continuous journey of improvement. It has facilitated the growth of a new culture where staff care authentically about pupils and actions are taken with integrity and rigour. Staff report improvements in the curriculum and pastoral approach as pivotal in changing the school's culture for the better. Staff are proud to work here. They appreciate the way that the school considers their workload and well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In a few subjects, including early reading, the school has not ensured that staff have the knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum as intended. This means that pupils do not learn as much as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge needed to teach the curriculum accurately and effectively.
- In some subjects, gaps in pupils' learning are not consistently identified and addressed. This means that some pupils do not build knowledge securely over time. The school should ensure that it identifies and addresses gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they achieve well.

### **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136003
<b>DfE registration number</b>	888/6111
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10375134
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	13
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Aurora Group
<b>Chair</b>	Sharon Pearson
<b>Principal</b>	Sarah Gregory
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£61,932
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 454826
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.the-aurora-group.com">www.the-aurora-group.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:brs-reception@the-aurora-group.com">brs-reception@the-aurora-group.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 to 28 September 2023

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the arrangements for leadership. A new chair of the proprietor body is in place. A new head of school has been appointed.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in September 2023. A progress monitoring inspection took place in April 2024. The school met all of the standards that were checked during this inspection.
- This school caters for pupils with social, emotional or mental health needs. All of these pupils have an EHC plan.
- Pupils are placed at the school by a number of commissioning local authorities. The school is registered to admit up to 80 pupils, aged nine to 16 years.
- The school operates from premises located at 159 Longmeanygate, Midge Hall, Leyland, Lancashire, PR26 7TB.
- The school makes use of five unregistered alternative provisions.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body and chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with the principal and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, food technology and personal, social, health and economic education. They met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited lessons and spoke to staff. They also looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning and experiences of the school. Inspectors also reviewed other aspects of the curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff or for pupils. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the residential care home manager.
- 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 reviewed a range of documentation relating to the standards and made a tour of the premises with representatives of the proprietor body.

### **Inspection team**

Ruth Moran, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Cocker

Ofsted Inspector

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