

Lansdowne School

Address: 49 Combermere Road, London, SW9 9QD

Unique reference number (URN): 100654

Inspection report: 10 February 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is very well managed. Leaders have a clear strategy to ensure that pupils come to school regularly. They contact families promptly when a pupil is absent and work closely with parents and carers to understand and reduce any barriers to coming to school. Leaders make extremely thoughtful adjustments to support pupils with more complex needs to attend more often. This persistence and care helps families to feel particularly well supported. Pupils want to attend school because they feel safe and valued. As a result, attendance is positive, with several pupils showing notable improvement.

Pupils rise to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They move safely around the school and settle quickly in lessons. The school is calm, orderly and friendly. Pupils respond positively to the warm, respectful way that adults speak to them. Staff understand and apply the behaviour policy in line with leaders' expectations. Pupils display highly positive attitudes to learning and are keen to contribute ideas and listen to each other. Breaktimes are well organised. Pupils access a wide range of sensory and physical activities that help them feel comfortable, active and ready to learn when they return to class. Post-16 students are positive role models to younger pupils. Leaders take firm but fair action on the rare occasions when unkind behaviour or discrimination occurs. This helps pupils to feel protected and valued.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have designed a rich and extensive personal development programme that gives pupils the knowledge and skills that they need as they grow up. This includes designing and implementing a broad personal, social and health education curriculum. This teaches pupils about healthy friendships and relationships, personal safety and making safe and sensible choices. The curriculum is carefully adapted to take into account pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. Key messages are delivered and repeated. Leaders make sure that teachers discuss different beliefs and ideas that support pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils also visit places of worship, museums and theatres. They experience the wider world and learn to respect different traditions. Leaders ensure that relationships and sex education is taught in an appropriate way to meet pupils' varying levels of understanding. This helps pupils to understand boundaries, recognise unsafe situations and know how to ask for help. Pupils also develop leadership and enterprise skills through a range of community projects and school council roles.

Leaders provide a wide range of experiences that build pupils' confidence, independence and life skills, particularly for those who are disadvantaged. For example, pupils regularly visit the post office, bank, shops and other community settings so they can learn about everyday life. Leaders make sure that pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities, including cooking, gardening and art. This helps pupils to find new interests and develop talents. Leaders secure meaningful work-experience placements for students in the post-16 provision and organise visits to employers. These opportunities help students to see what adult life looks like and feel prepared for their next steps. Careers guidance is thoughtful and personal and helps pupils to make realistic, ambitious plans for their future.

Leaders make sure that pupils with additional wellbeing needs receive the right support. For example, leaders provide sensory spaces and arrange art, music and drama therapy so pupils can express feelings and stay emotionally well. Pupils are well equipped to take a full and active part in school life and to prepare for adulthood.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

Leaders have designed a highly effective post-16 study programme. It meets students' individual needs and prepares them very well for adulthood. Leaders know students' strengths, interests and barriers, and shape courses and experiences around these. Students follow a flexible mix of qualifications, including employability awards and entry-level pathways. These help them to build real skills in readiness for work and life beyond school. Staff check what students, including those who are disadvantaged, can do and give them the help that they need to make highly positive progress from their starting points.

Leaders place a strong emphasis on independence. They provide regular opportunities for students to practise travel skills, money management and communication in real situations. Students visit workplaces and community settings such as cafés, shops, banks and theatres. They also take part in meaningful work experience placements that match their interests and needs. These experiences help students to grow in confidence and understand what adult life looks like.

Careers information and guidance are clear and personalised to individual students. Staff work closely with students and their families to identify next steps and make sure that transitions are extremely well supported and successful. Leaders keep a close check on destinations at ages 18 and 19. This ensures that students move on to a suitable college course, training place or supported work pathway. As a result, students successfully develop the confidence and skills to be as independent and ready for their next steps as possible.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils make progress from their varied starting points as they move through the school. Their work shows growing confidence in the foundational skills of communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils are able to recall earlier learning and apply it to new tasks. In subjects such as science, physical education, food technology and art and design, pupils build skills securely over time because they practise new learning until they remember it. Staff understand how to support most pupils so that they make steady progress through the curriculum.

Where pupils take accredited courses, such as entry-level qualifications and employability awards, they achieve well and gain skills for the future. Leaders ensure that post-16 students are well prepared for their next steps through, for example, students' participation in work experience, travel training and community-based learning.

Although pupils' achievement is positive overall, there is some unevenness in achievement across subjects. In some subjects, teaching activities can be too simple or focus on knowledge that is already secure. For a small number of pupils, this reduces how well they make progress in their learning. Leaders are taking appropriate actions to improve teaching so that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad curriculum that helps pupils to build knowledge, confidence and independence. Staff know pupils well and choose activities that build on what they can already do. Leaders make sure that pupils routinely spend time learning and practising key skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and where this needs to be more consistent. Their work ensures that, on the whole, most teaching is of high quality. Where this is the case, teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain ideas clearly. They also use well-chosen approaches, such as practical experiences, that help pupils to understand and remember new learning.

Many pupils grow in confidence because staff revisit important ideas often and use examples to guide them. For example, teachers use visual supports and practical resources with simple step-by-step instructions so that pupils can take part successfully. Many lessons help pupils to practise new words and improve spoken language alongside developing other communication methods. However, at times, these positive features are not fully embedded in practice. Sometimes, teachers do not identify the next steps in learning that would help pupils to think more deeply. In a few instances, the focus on building pupils' language is not as well developed as leaders intend. Leaders are addressing this through robust training and support for staff so that high-quality practice becomes more embedded.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school welcomes every pupil and makes sure that they feel known and valued. Pupils join with highly varied starting points, and leaders ensure that staff understand each pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders identify these needs early on and work with families to decide what support is needed. Staff work closely with therapists, specialist teachers and social care partners so that the support pupils receive is carefully thought through and tailored to them as individuals. Leaders use the pupil premium funding wisely to further enhance the support that they provide for disadvantaged pupils. This has a positive impact on how most pupils learn and achieve.

Leaders have ensured that pupils typically receive the right support to learn with confidence in the majority of lessons. Staff are generally well trained in strategies to help pupils settle and take part fully in lessons. These include, for example, the use of visual aids, sensory tools and clear routines. Many pupils also benefit from therapeutic approaches that help them to join in and be ready to learn. Teachers and leaders check pupils' progress often and use this to decide what they need to learn next.

While support for pupils' needs is of high quality overall, there are some pockets of inconsistency across the school. To improve this, leaders continue to work with staff to build

their expertise, offering clear guidance on how best to support pupils' learning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the school well. They understand clearly what is working and what needs to improve. They act quickly when challenges arise. Leaders have responded with urgency and care to the changing needs of pupils at the school. They have worked closely with a range of experts and external partners to make sure that pupils get the right help from the moment they arrive. For example, when pupils with more complex communication and sensory needs joined the school, leaders brought in additional professional advice and adapted routines and resources. This ensured that these pupils could settle safely and learn with confidence. Leaders' flexible, proactive approach has had a clear impact on pupils' wellbeing and their readiness to learn.

Governors also know the school's context well. They understand the challenges that come with meeting the needs of a rapidly changing cohort of pupils. Governors provide a balance of support and challenge. They check how effectively leaders use resources and that decisions are taken with pupils' best interests at the centre. Governors' oversight helps leaders to stay focused on improving the quality of education and care over time.

Staff access a professional learning programme that builds their skills. Staff, including early career teachers, feel well supported. They say workload can be high, but they also say leaders listen and adjust expectations of them when needed. Leaders check the quality of teaching. They use this information to develop consistency across the school. Leaders also work closely with families and outside agencies so that pupils with complex needs receive joined-up support that reflects their individual circumstances and needs.

Leaders' and governors' vision and their work to realise it mean that this is a school that is caring, ambitious and increasingly well equipped to help pupils grow and thrive.

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

Pupils happily arrive to a calm and welcoming school. They feel safe because routines are clear and staff know them well. Adults model respectful behaviour, and pupils follow their example. When pupils feel worried or upset, staff use effective strategies to help them recognise their feelings. Staff then support pupils to manage these feelings with growing independence.

Pupils feel that they belong. They make friends, look after each other and enjoy being part of a warm and inclusive community. Bullying is very rare, and pupils trust adults to help them deal with issues quickly.

Attendance is positive and reflects how much pupils want to be at school each day. Pupils enjoy learning, including the practical lessons that help them to remember new ideas. Pupils take part confidently in most lessons because teachers meet their needs well. Pupils achieve well overall. Their work in lessons and in books, as well as the qualifications they

obtain, demonstrate their progress through the curriculum. This includes in their language development, reading, writing and mathematics.

The school environment is well designed to support pupils' needs and development. For example, pupils choose outdoor activities that meet their sensory needs, such as bikes, trikes, music areas and quiet spaces. These activities also help them to build strength, balance and coordination.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the community. They practise real-life skills through road-safety sessions, shopping, work experience and outdoor learning. These experiences help to build their independence. Pupils also benefit from a range of therapeutic support, including working with speech and language professionals and professionals from occupational health and the education psychology service. Therapeutic provision in art, music and drama further enhances the support that pupils receive.

Students in the post-16 provision continue to grow in confidence through, for example, independent travel training, money management lessons and work placements that match their interests and varied starting points. Pupils receive clear careers guidance and meet people from different workplaces. As a result, pupils are increasingly prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed the work started on curriculum and teaching to ensure full consistency in staff's expertise in using the most effective strategies that help pupils overcome their barriers to learning.
- Leaders should ensure that, across all subjects, learning activities consistently provide the opportunities and challenge necessary to enable pupils to access the curriculum fully and make secure progress.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Susan Osborn.

The school is part of a federation called the Lansdowne Turney Federation.

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 (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the chair and vice chair of the governing board, executive headteacher, school business manager, head of school, assistant headteachers, teachers and support staff as well as a representative from the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

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 is a specialist setting where all pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school caters for pupils with autism and speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils also have social, emotional and mental health needs and moderate learning difficulties. Some pupils have a visual or hearing impairment. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school does not use alternative provision.

Executive headteacher: Linda Adams

Lead inspector:

Una Buckley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Jonathan Newby, Ofsted Inspector

Francis Gonzalez, Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Neary, 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 10 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

170

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.

School capacity

170

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

78.07%

What does this mean?

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

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

100.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Well above 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)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

VI - Visual Impairment, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

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

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
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2023 leavers (provisional)	100%
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2022 leavers (revised)	94%
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2021 leavers (revised)	86%
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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
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2024/25 (2 term)	10.0%
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2023/24 (3 term)	9.1%
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Year	This school
2022/23 (3 term)	11.5%

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
2024/25 (2 term)	33.3%
2023/24 (3 term)	31.7%
2022/23 (3 term)	33.6%

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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