

Inspection of The Ribble Autism School

Emily Street, Lostock Hall, Preston PR5 5SZ

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy here and excited to arrive at school each morning. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Staff understand pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities and respond with compassion and care. This helps pupils be safe and settled and be ready to learn.

In the short time that the school has been open, leaders have acted swiftly to establish a positive and tailored learning environment. They are ambitious for what all pupils can achieve and have created the conditions needed for pupils to learn successfully. With the effective support of staff, pupils develop positive strategies to manage their emotions. They behave well and learn how to interact positively with others. As a result, pupils have settled quickly into their new school and show increased confidence and improved communication. They achieve well.

Pupils benefit from a growing range of enrichment experiences that extend their learning beyond the classroom. These include swimming sessions, visits to the local library and walks in the community. Staff adapt such activities thoughtfully to meet pupils' individual needs and are steadily introducing new opportunities at a suitable pace for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to express their preferences and explore emerging interests as part of their broader personal development.

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

The school has made a strong start in establishing its culture, curriculum and systems. It has designed a curriculum that reflects and caters for the needs of its pupils. The school has implemented a clear framework that outlines the intended milestones pupils will work towards. Therapists and staff use this framework effectively to design personalised curriculum pathways for each pupil.

In many areas of the curriculum, staff deliver learning that is well matched to pupils' developmental stages. However, there are times when this is not consistent across the school and in all subjects. The school is in the process of strengthening curriculum guidance and staff development to ensure that there is a shared staff understanding of how to break down long-term goals into manageable learning steps. While progress is being made, this work is still ongoing. As a result, sometimes pupils do not build their knowledge in the most logical or secure way.

The school carries out regular checks on what pupils know and can do. In areas such as communication and social interaction, these checks are particularly thorough and used effectively to inform future learning activities.

All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school is effective in identifying any further needs pupils may have and addressing them promptly. In-house specialists, including occupational and speech and language therapists, support staff well to embed EHC plan targets into pupils' curriculum learning.

The school fosters a love of reading. It does this through daily rhymes, songs and stories. Many pupils are working at the early stages of recognising sounds and communicating. The school typically supports pupils at this stage of learning to read well. The school has an appropriate phonics programme in place for when pupils are ready.

The school promotes pupils' personal development effectively. It has a strong emphasis on building pupils' independence in areas such as personal care, communication and social skills. This includes support with aspects such as toileting, feeding and oral hygiene. The school has designed a calendar of events that reflects cultural and religious diversity. Fundamental British values are promoted effectively. For example, staff model respect and patience, helping pupils to develop these fundamental behaviours. Pupils are also supported to find their voice through making choices and accessing tailored resources and environments.

Pupils conduct themselves well during the day and are ably supported by staff to do so. They attend school regularly thanks to the bespoke support that the school puts in place for them.

The school engages well with its stakeholders. Staff feel valued and report that their workload is manageable. The school communicates positively with parents and carers through daily diaries and weekly email updates, which many parents appreciate. However, some parents do not feel that they receive enough information and guidance to enable them to work collaboratively with the school to support their child's social, emotional and academic development.

The proprietor ensures that the independent schools standards (the standards) are met consistently. For example, the proprietor ensures that risk assessments are detailed and take account of pupils' individual needs. The school site is secure and well maintained. Key policies are in place and frequently reviewed. The premises are very well maintained. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some curriculum areas, the school has not ensured that staff have a consistent understanding of how to break down long-term goals effectively into manageable learning steps. This sometimes hinders staff from helping pupils build their knowledge in the most logical, secure way. The school should provide staff with clear curriculum guidance and strengthen their expertise to ensure that pupils learn coherently and achieve strong outcomes.
- The school has not provided parents with sufficient information about their child's

learning and development in school. This hinders parents' ability to enhance the school's work and have the best possible impact on their child. The school should ensure that parents have the information they need to know and understand what is happening at school, so they can build on this at home.

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

Unique reference number	150282
DfE registration number	888/6134
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10375148
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Limited
Chair	Nancy O'Regan
Headteacher	Lisa Sharrock
Annual fees (day pupils)	£87,184 to £137,369
Telephone number	01772 505109
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/the-ribble-autism-school
Email address	lisasharrock@aspriscs.co.uk

Information about this school

- This was the first standard inspection of the school since it was first registered by the Department for Education on 26 June 2024.
- The school is located at Emily Street, Lostock Hall, Preston PR5 5SZ.
- The school is part of Aspris Children's Services Limited.
- The school caters for pupils with autism.
- The school is operating within its registered age range and admissions number. It is currently at capacity, with 10 pupils currently on roll.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

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.

- 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 met with the headteacher, the chair of the proprietor body, the director of education and members of staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas: personal and social development, physical and sensory development, and personal development. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some parents about their child's learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also talked to leaders and staff about some other curriculum areas.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and the standards. They also looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- As part of their checks on the standards, the lead inspector made a tour of the

school premises.

- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted’s online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also made telephone contact with available parents to gather their views.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Michele Costello

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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