

Linden Road Academy and Hearing Impaired Base

Linden Road, Denton, Tameside M34 6EF

Inspection dates

14–15 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, have provided a good standard of education for pupils since the school became an academy in 2015.
- Pupils' attainment at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently at or above national averages by the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, too few pupils reached the higher standard at the end of key stage 2.
- Current pupils make good progress across their subjects.
- Pupils' progress in writing across the school is a strong. Their writing skills are well developed.
- Pupils who have special educational needs, (SEN) and/or disabilities, including those attached to the resource base, make good progress because of the highly skilled support that they receive.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Staff cater for their needs for well.
- Pupils behave sensibly, cooperate with one another maturely and relish learning in lessons.
- Children make good progress in the early years. They enjoy learning and grow in confidence. However, leaders' assessments of pupils' starting points on entry into the early years are not robust enough.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Teachers take every opportunity to hone their skills and improve their practice. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to make more rapid progress from their different starting points.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to broaden their horizons and develop good emotional health.
- Although the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is strengthening, older pupils are not confident about the range of lifestyles, relationships and families that exist in modern society.
- Subject leaders and other middle leaders are skilled and knowledgeable. They devise effective strategies for improvement and evaluate their impact carefully.
- Governance is effective. The local governing body has kept sound oversight of the school. Members are skilled and committed. The trust provides the school with high-quality training opportunities and support.
- While most parents are satisfied with the school, a small but significant minority expressed concerns about a range of issues.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable more pupils to reach the higher standards in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Further improve communication with parents and carers.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the school's PSHE programme to enable pupils to develop a comprehensive understanding of the range of relationships, lifestyles and families that exists in modern Britain.
- Improve the system for assessing children's starting points on entry into the early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school benefits from a strong and skilled leadership team. Each leader brings a unique set of skills and experiences, which together have led to significant improvements in pupils' academic achievements. A culture of high expectations and cooperation permeates all areas of the school. Staff and pupils fully embrace the school's 'Proud to be Linden' motto.
- Leaders' careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance has led to appropriate identification of school priorities. Their improvement planning is effective. Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils progress well by being vigilant in their tracking of pupils' achievement to ensure that no group is disadvantaged.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly and provide skilled coaching and mentoring opportunities to help bring about improvements. Newly qualified teachers' skills improve quickly. The school has been successful in developing leadership skills among new teachers. The results of staff surveys all show that the school invests well in professional development.
- Subject leaders of mathematics and English, who are also the vice-principals, are highly effective and have devised curriculums to motivate and challenge pupils. They consider pupils' interests carefully to bring learning to life through themed activities. Key stage 2 pupils have produced a wide range of high-quality writing around the theme of the Second World War. Leaders plan interesting opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills through this topic.
- The principal has created a new middle-leadership post to improve pupils' resilience and responsibility for their own learning. The middle leader in charge has devised creative ways to motivate pupils to learn key arithmetical skills. She has put together carefully thought-out plans, which are showing early signs of success.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively. A particular success has been the work of the pastoral leader, who has liaised closely with targeted pupils and their families.
- The physical education and sport funding has been used to good effect. Pupils' participation rates and fundamental skill development have increased year on year. The sports coach's lunchtime sporting activities have further increased participation rates, especially for girls. Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of the funding carefully.
- The SEN and/or disabilities coordinator has a comprehensive overview of the additional needs of pupils. She carefully allocates the funding to ensure maximum success for each of them. The coordinator trains the teaching assistants well. Pupils in the hearing-impaired base receive skilled support from their teachers. The resource base is highly effective.
- The school has devised a number of opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of the world. Assemblies reinforce pupils' moral understanding, while day-to-day lessons promote good cooperation and respect. Pupils learn about different religions in their topic work and celebrate festivals from

around the world, like Chinese New Year. Key stage 2 pupils said they valued their experience of visiting the local synagogue.

- The school's PSHE curriculum is strengthening. Pupils learn about a range of issues in society, including environmental and health problems during their philosophy programme. Leaders, however, do not monitor the effectiveness of this work as well as they could. Teachers, for example, do not always cover the subject of families and relationships in sufficient depth for pupils' age and stage. Consequently, some older pupils express a limited understanding of the range of lifestyles, relationships and families that make up modern society.
- The school's work to develop aspects of pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is good. The student leadership team is highly regarded by staff and pupils. Members learn important democratic skills and discuss aspects of their learning with school leaders. The school's response to the Manchester Arena bombing was entirely appropriate and sensitive. Skilled professionals addressed pupils' questions and concerns. As a result, pupils' attitudes towards the perpetrators do not stigmatise any religious group in society.
- While the majority of parents who completed the online survey and who spoke with inspectors were satisfied with the school and teachers, a small but significant minority of parents expressed negative views about the school and its leadership. In particular, these parents felt unhappy with the quality of communication between the school and home. Leaders acknowledge that further work is necessary to develop positive relationships between the school and a small proportion of parents.
- The trust has kept sound oversight of the school. The school improvement officer has provided valuable advice and guidance for leaders. The trust's Manchester Hub, made up of nine schools, provides teachers and leaders with essential opportunities to share good practice, standardise pupils' work and develop the curriculum further.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is efficient and effective. The chair and vice-chair have a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school.
- Governors have developed their skills to enable them to challenge leaders' own evaluation of the school's effectiveness. They visit the school regularly to gain first-hand understanding of the school's work.
- Governors keep sound oversight of pupils' progress and also promote the ethos and the culture of the school. They interview pupils regularly to check on the impact of teaching.
- The school's spending of additional funding is carefully checked. Consequently, the school's use of the pupil premium funding, physical education and sports funding and SEN and/or disabilities funding is effective.
- Governors meet with leaders regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of their work with the most vulnerable pupils in the school. They ensure that safeguarding practices are constantly reviewed and improved.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school ensures that staff are trained well so that they understand their roles and their responsibility to keep children safe.
- The recently adopted centralised system to record pupils' concerns related to child protection gives leaders a comprehensive overview of how effective their support has been. They act quickly and effectively to support pupils at risk.
- Teachers fully understand the range of local risks, including the risks of extremist views and intolerant attitudes. All teachers have received 'Prevent' duty training.
- Pupils express confidence in dealing with the risks of using mobile devices, including when texting. They also know how to keep safe on the internet. The school's 'whizz kids' are highly regarded because they have been trained by staff to provide important safety guidance for pupils across the school in a pupil-friendly way.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They trust the adults in the school to deal with their problems. Pupils use the 'worry monster' to express their fears and concerns to staff privately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good because teachers have honed their skills well. Teachers in all year groups know their pupils well and monitor their progress meticulously.
- The key to teachers' success is the way that they promote positive behaviour for learning and create an engaging learning environment. They do this by choosing resources which interest pupils and by praising good behaviour. For example, pupils in key stage 2 spoke enthusiastically about the Stone Age jewellery that they made. The classroom in Year 5 and 6 was 'brought to life' by a mocked-up Andersen shelter to help pupils understand what life might have been like during the Blitz.
- Teachers are highly skilled in and knowledgeable about developing pupils' writing. They immerse pupils in a range of texts in all year groups so that pupils feel confident about writing accurately and creatively. Consequently, pupils make better-than-average progress in this subject.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading skills well. They teach phonics effectively and pupils use this to decipher unfamiliar words. Pupils read often and widely. Teachers specifically and effectively develop pupils' comprehension skills. This was an area that was identified as weak across the school previously.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Teachers develop pupils' arithmetical skills daily and generate healthy competition to 'beat their targets'. Teachers help pupils to apply their skills well by using a range of real-life problems regularly in mathematics lessons. Pupils develop their reasoning skills well by explaining their thinking when presented with problems.
- Teachers are beginning to provide more opportunities for pupils to reach the higher

standards in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2. However, their work to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their knowledge is not fully embedded across all classes.

- Teachers' feedback both orally in class and in pupils' workbooks is helpful. They are careful to check pupils' misunderstanding in lessons. Pupils use teachers' advice well to move onto the next stage of their learning.
- Teachers have taught pupils to write neatly and legibly.
- Teachers' subject knowledge of subjects other than English and mathematics is secure. They plan lessons to enable pupils to reach age-related standards well. However, their planning does not allow pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of each subject so that they can excel in their learning.
- Teachers have used events in history, such as the Holocaust to help pupils understand the devastating effects of prejudice and racism. Discussions with pupils using child-friendly current-affairs programmes help pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show developed skills in cooperation and group work. They take turns and listen to one another maturely. Pupils say they are 'proud to be Linden'.
- Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs. These include, volleyball, yoga, 'multi-skills' and drama. They gain rewards for their achievements. All pupils, regardless of gender or disability, are encouraged to attend.
- Pupils take their leadership roles and responsibilities seriously. The student leadership team has represented the pupils well when making improvements to the school, such as developing the 'working walls' in the classroom.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay healthy. Their physical education lessons, their assemblies and the school's canteen promote healthy nutrition well. Teachers support pupils' emotional health in everyday lessons. They teach pupils how to get help when they are stuck and to never give up. Teachers reward pupils' efforts throughout lessons.
- Pupils know how to keep safe online. The pupil-led group called 'whizz kids' teaches pupils in all classes how to navigate the risks of using mobile devices and the internet, including those associated with online games.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and trust the adults to help them with their problems.
- Some older pupils show a limited understanding of the range of lifestyles, families and relationships that exist in society today.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly in class and during break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils' rates of attendance at school have risen and are now close to the national averages. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has also decreased but the figure remains slightly above the national averages. This is mostly because some parents take family holidays during term time, despite receiving penalties. The school takes appropriate action to discourage these parental choices.
- The behaviour logs show few incidents of bullying. On the rare occasions when they do happen, teachers take firm and decisive action.
- A very small minority of pupils have in the past displayed some intolerant and prejudiced behaviours but teachers' successful actions have significantly reduced these types of incidents in the school.
- Pupils' behaviour in the hearing-impaired base is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has consistently been at or above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress at key stage 2 is consistently strong in writing. Their progress in reading and mathematics was significantly above national averages and then plateaued to broadly average in 2017. Current performance information from the school shows that pupils are making good progress in nearly all years.
- Previous years' outcomes showed that disadvantaged pupils' progress lagged behind that of other pupils in key stage 2. Current pupils are rapidly increasing their rates of progress in most year groups. The school's focus on priority groups among the disadvantaged pupils is making a difference. From their different starting points the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally is diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, too few pupils achieved the higher standard at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, the small number of most able pupils did not reach the standards of which they were capable. Currently, more pupils are on track to achieve the higher standards than last year and work to improve the levels of stretch and challenge in lessons is ongoing.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the phonics standard at the end of key stage 1 is broadly average. This represents good progress considering pupils' low starting points.
- In 2017, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment of the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was at or above national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching greater depth from each starting point was close to or above national averages. Currently, pupils are set to reach similar or better standards.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points at each key stage. Those pupils in the hearing-impairment resource base also make good progress because of the highly skilled support they receive.

- A high proportion of pupils are currently on track to reach age-related standards in subjects other than English and mathematics. However, too few, especially the most able, achieve greater depth at both key stages.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders and managers have developed the early years provision both indoors and outdoors effectively. The resources are vibrant and well thought out. Children are excited and engaged with the toys and make-believe materials.
- Leaders have developed an effective tracking system to monitor children's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the early learning goals as they progress through the early years. When children fall behind, leaders put in place careful support to help them to make progress.
- Leaders' systems to understand children's skills when they start school are not robust enough. Currently, their assessments on entry do not take full account of parents' views and staff do not routinely identify the strengths that some children have when they start school in Nursery.
- Children are safe and well cared for. Adults are vigilant about children's welfare and attend to their needs sensitively. Parents praise the way adults help their children settle.
- Children develop good social skills because the adults model these behaviours throughout the day. Saying 'please' and 'thank you' and 'good morning' are encouraged routinely.
- Disadvantaged children make as much progress as other children because adults meet their needs very well.
- Phonics skills are taught well by staff. Children learn to read simple words and recognise letters quickly. Staff have developed their teaching skills well. They encourage children to love stories and to use pens and write early. Consequently, children's literacy skills are improving year on year.
- The early years leader provides a range of opportunities for children to use numbers, count and spot patterns throughout the indoor and outdoor area. Children enjoy playing with numbers and shapes and make good progress.
- The proportion of children on track to reach a good level of development is close to the national average. This represents continuous improvement since the school became an academy. Children make good progress from their low starting points in most areas of their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	141408
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10042417

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jack Harrison
Principal	Andrea Ives
Telephone number	0161 320 0002
Website	www.lindenroadacademy.co.uk
Email address	admin@lindenroadacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school is sponsored by The Enquire Learning Trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The proportion who have an education, health and care plan is higher than average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for hearing-impaired pupils, with eight pupils currently using this. The pupils spend much of their time in mainstream lessons.
- The school operates a breakfast club which is governed by the school.

- The school provides morning and afternoon sessions for Nursery children.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors evaluated the quality of teaching and learning in all year groups, which included observing lessons and examining pupils' workbooks in most subjects. Most observations were carried out jointly with the vice-principals.
- Inspectors met with all leaders, vice-principals, who are also the leaders of English and mathematics, and the SEN and/or disabilities coordinator. The leader and teachers in the resource based provision were also interviewed. The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The chief executive officer of the trust and the trust's school improvement officer were interviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 44 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text facility, 132 responses to the pupil survey and 26 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors spoke with some parents before school and took account of comments sent to Ofsted from parents during the inspection. The lead inspector reviewed the school's own parent surveys.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, behaviour logs, safeguarding records, performance information and school policies.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Morley	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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