

Inspection of Phoenix Academy

85 Bounces Road, Edmonton, London N9 8LD

Inspection dates: 10–12 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

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 are proud of their school. They like the fact the school is small and that everybody knows one another. Pupils enjoy their time here. They treat visitors with courtesy. They treat each other and staff with respect. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. They know that there is always someone who will help them if they are worried. Leaders are ambitious for their pupils.

Behaviour is good most of the time because leaders do not tolerate disruption to learning. Pupils act sensibly when moving around the school. They chat happily with friends during breaktimes. Adults build strong relationships with pupils and take good care of them. This means that pupils feel safe and comfortable. One pupil said, 'Everyone looks out for everyone.' Leaders take appropriate measures if there are any concerns about bullying.

The school provides pupils with activities and opportunities beyond the classroom. These are helping to build pupils' confidence and their understanding of the world.

In some subjects, pupils do not study as much as they should. For example, practical lessons in science are limited and aspects of art and design are not covered well enough. This means that pupils miss out on some valuable and worthwhile learning.

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

Leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. They find out what pupils have learned previously and use the information well. This means that teachers' understanding of pupils' starting points is secure. Nevertheless, the quality of education is not good enough. It is better in some subject areas than others. For example, subjects taught through the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum are well planned so that pupils' knowledge builds over time. Subjects taught outside of the ACE curriculum, such as art and design, do not have as clear an approach to organising what pupils should learn and remember.

Leaders have not used training well enough to support staff development. Staff do not always have the skills and subject knowledge needed to support pupils across the range of subjects. Pupils learn less well in some subjects than in others. In English, although pupils build their knowledge of grammar and literacy devices over time, they do not have opportunity to study Shakespeare texts in full. Pupils have access to strong scientific knowledge and experiments are described to them in their work books. Nevertheless, their understanding is hampered through lack of opportunity to complete regular practical work. In mathematics, younger pupils now have access to a range of mathematical resources. In the secondary phase, pupils build their knowledge in mathematics well.

Reading is put at the heart of what the pupils need in order to learn and progress through the school. In the primary phase, staff have the necessary skills to teach

reading. Children who have not previously learned to read learn phonics soon after joining. Pupils read daily to staff and are encouraged to read at home. Pupils are given suitable books to read to practise sounds they have learned. As a result, pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers. Older pupils have access to a range of texts which enable them to read around their subjects. When pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, teachers adapt work effectively so that these pupils can access the same opportunities as all others.

Pupils are keen to do well. Positive relationships help pupils to work hard. Teachers try to help pupils understand when they find things difficult. Most pupils attend school regularly. A minority do not. Leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance is swift and effective. Many pupils have stronger attendance at Phoenix Academy than in their previous schools.

The school provides well for pupils' development. There is a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and what it means to be a citizen of this country. Many pupils have positions of responsibility within the school. Pupils said that they value their house system and enjoy taking part in house activities. Pupils explained how the house system helps them feel part of the school community. Throughout their time in the school pupils grow in self-confidence and develop strength of character. Leaders also provide pupils with comprehensive careers advice and guidance.

Following the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that all independent school standards are now met. However, governors and leaders do not monitor the quality of education well enough. They have been slow to improve both the subject knowledge of the staff and the curriculum in many subject areas.

Leaders work hard to build positive relationships with parents. Staff enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. They report any concerns about a pupil's safety or well-being. Leaders are quick to follow up concerns. They make sure that pupils get the help they need as soon as possible. Staff know the safeguarding risks which pupils may face in the local area. They make sure that pupils learn how to reduce the risks they may encounter.

Leaders make appropriate pre-recruitment checks, making sure that staff are safe to work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- When planning the curriculum, leaders have not thought enough about the content in some subjects and how it is sequenced. This is particularly the case for subjects that are not part of the ACE curriculum. This means that pupils do not develop their understanding as effectively as they might. Leaders should review curriculum plans in all subjects, including science and art, to ensure that sufficient content is covered in a logical order.
- Leaders do not use staff training well enough to support teachers' professional development. This means that staff do not always have the skills or subject knowledge needed to teach the school's curriculum effectively. Leaders should review and improve the use of staff training so that teachers are well supported and confident about what to teach, when and why.
- Governors have not held leaders to account sufficiently for the school's performance. Governors are committed to the school and want to provide pupils with the best possible education. Governors should strengthen procedures for reviewing the school's work and act with greater urgency to address weaknesses in the quality of education.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134580
DfE registration number	308/6068
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10092480
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	N.L.M. Trust
Chair	Gareth Hawkes
Headteacher	Paul Kelly
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,940
Telephone number	020 8887 6888
Website	www.phoenixacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@phoenixacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–14 December 2017

Information about this school

- The school is a Christian faith school. Pupils follow the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum in the mornings. Pupils follow the school's own curriculum in the afternoon, learning art, music, physical education, citizenship, computing and PSHE education.
- The last full standard inspection took place on 12–14 December 2017.
- The school does not use alternative provision. The school does not have any pupils with an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

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

- We met with the headteacher, the chair of governors and members of the governing body. We also held discussions with staff and pupils.
- We focused on the quality of the curriculum in reading, English, mathematics and art. We met the curriculum leaders for each subject, visited lessons, talked to pupils, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers.
- We checked the school's safeguarding arrangements. We held discussions with leaders and explored staff knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters. We reviewed a range of safeguarding records. We also scrutinised the single central register of staff suitability to work with children and looked at school records.
- At the time of the inspection, there were too few sixth-form students registered at the school to report on the 16 to 19 programme.

Inspection team

Carolyn Dickinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maureen Okoye

Ofsted Inspector

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