

Inspection of Linaker Primary School

Sefton Street, Southport, Merseyside PR8 5DB

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Linaker School. Pupils say that teachers expect them to concentrate, work hard in lessons and do well. They learn subjects which are interesting and fun. However, in some subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they are capable of doing. This is because the key information that pupils should know, and when they should be taught it, is not defined clearly enough. Children in the early years achieve well. Their learning is carefully structured to build on what they already know.

Pupils feel safe in school. They typically behave well because of well-established routines. Pupils move around the school calmly and with purpose. They are confident that staff will act quickly to help them resolve any arguments and stop any bullying from happening. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to visit the 'snug' to talk with dedicated trusted adults about any concerns or worries.

Pupils speak fondly of the wide range of additional clubs, activities and visits they experienced before the onset of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions. School clubs have now restarted. They include opportunities for pupils to develop their social, sporting and academic interests.

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

The school's curriculum follows the national curriculum closely. It is suitably ambitious.

Pupils achieve well in some subjects, for example early reading and mathematics. This is because the content in both these subjects is well planned and builds pupils' knowledge step by step. Staff have secure subject knowledge in both subjects. However, in other subjects, too much is left to chance. Curriculum planning does not clearly define the key knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which it should be taught. Some subject leaders lack the knowledge and skills needed to ensure their subject is taught and monitored effectively. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they could.

In the early years, it is a different picture. Here, leaders have forged ahead with improvements. They have worked with external experts to design and deliver a well-considered curriculum. Teaching in early years systematically builds children's knowledge on what they already know in all the areas of learning. Consequently, children leave the early years well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils start to learn to read from when they first enter the Nursery Class. Teachers expertly develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonics. Reading books are closely matched to the sounds that pupils have learned. However, the planning of how reading is taught in key stage 2 lacks the detail of the curriculum plans for early reading at key stage 1 and the early years. This hinders pupils' abilities to

become confident in comprehending more complex texts. That said, pupils like reading and are happy to talk about their favourite authors and books.

Teachers use assessment effectively to identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. However, sometimes teachers do not ensure that activities build on what pupils already know. As a result, in some subjects, pupils are not deepening their knowledge and understanding.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) quickly identifies pupils with SEND through well-established procedures. She regularly reviews pupils' needs and the impact of the support they receive. She provides guidance to staff and seeks appropriate help from external agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND have access to the full curriculum.

Senior leaders have established clear expectations of behaviour around school and in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn. Typically, pupils concentrate well in class. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts learning. Leaders ensure that playtimes are well supervised by staff who model the behaviour expected of pupils. Trusted adults make effective use of playtimes to provide pupils with opportunities to chat with them about any worries or concerns.

Leaders expect pupils to attend school on a regular basis. These expectations are shared with parents and pupils. There are clearly defined procedures in place to support pupils who are reluctant to attend school on a regular basis. As a result, pupils' attendance shows sustained improvement.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive well-targeted support to help them access the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to develop their talents beyond the academic curriculum. For example, pupils are given opportunities to set up their own clubs, thereby developing their leadership skills. Clubs such as football, dance and science help pupils develop their social skills while learning about their interests. The resumption of educational visits to places of culture and links with the school's wider community effectively promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values.

Senior leaders and governors have correctly identified what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. This includes a desire to improve the quality of education that the school offers to pupils. Leaders seek appropriate advice from external agencies to help them bring about the change that is required but recognise that this work is not complete.

Staff are proud to work at the school and are committed to improving the school. Staff appreciate how leaders carefully consider staff's workload when planning additional activities to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Frequent training ensures staff have up-to-date knowledge of what to look for to help keep pupils safe. Staff routinely share information with leaders using well established procedures. Leaders routinely evaluate the safeguarding information they receive and use it to help inform their actions to keep pupils safe. Leaders have a secure knowledge of how to effectively manage any concerns. They routinely work with families and other appropriate agencies to help keep pupils safe. Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the risks of harm that pupils may face from the locality and online because of the training they have received.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, curriculum plans do not identify the key pieces of knowledge that pupils must learn or when this knowledge should be taught. This means that teaching does not systematically build on what pupils already know in these subjects. Leaders must ensure that curriculum planning in all subjects clearly defines the key knowledge that they expect pupils to learn and in the order that they want pupils to build that knowledge. Some subject leaders lack the knowledge they require to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of their subjects. This means that leaders do not have a clear view of how teachers are planning and delivering the school's intended curriculum. Senior leaders must ensure that all subjects leaders have the knowledge they require to effectively evaluate the impact of their subjects and that they bring about the changes needed to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

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.

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

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	104864
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10199569
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Jones
Headteacher	Lisa Brown
Website	www.linakerschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 to 25 November 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Since May 2021, the school's deputy headteacher has been appointed as acting headteacher due to the long-term absence of the headteacher.
- Since the last inspection, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed.
- The school uses one alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and school life. Inspectors spoke with the chair and vice-chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with the acting headteacher and other senior leaders, including two assistant headteachers, the SENCo and school business manager.

- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science and history. For each deep dive, an inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also met with the leaders of a range of other subjects to scrutinise curriculum planning and pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the work of the school, and scrutinised documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire, including 17 free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered 21 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Olsson

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021