

Inspection of Light Hall School

Hathaway Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 2PZ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

'The best from everyone, all of the time' is the school motto. Staff and pupils work hard to live up to it. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum supports their personal development.

Teachers pay attention to the progress of all their pupils. Pupils are positive about the way teachers help them to learn. They make good progress.

Pupils get on well with each other and with their teachers. In this large school, staff are attentive to the well-being of pupils. In their inspection survey responses, many parents praised the school's welcoming atmosphere. They also mentioned the effective support their children get, including the period when they had to learn from home because of the pandemic.

Pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school. Poor behaviour is not accepted. If any pupils misbehave, then teachers are prompt to respond. The school supports pupils who misbehave to improve their behaviour. Staff also tackle bullying well. Pupils feel safe at school and do not consider bullying to be a problem.

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

Leaders have improved the quality of education. They also have a long-term plan to improve it further. Subject leaders and teachers work well together to deliver these improvements. Over the last two years, they have redesigned the curriculum and teachers started using the new curriculum plans this term.

Teachers check that pupils remember what they have learned. In languages, for example, teachers regularly start lessons by asking pupils to use phrases they learned before. In history, teachers often ask five quick questions about the last lessons. Teachers use pupils' answers to adapt what they teach. They also check how well pupils learn new topics. Pupils keep records of what they need to do to improve. In English, for example, they have green 'tracking' sheets.

Work in books shows that pupils progress well overall, but do better in some subjects than in others. Leaders are aware that the impact of the new curriculum varies between subjects. They are still developing systems to check that progress is strong in all subjects.

Leaders want all pupils to have the literacy skills they need to learn well. The school has a 'literacy for learning' policy. Pupils who do not read well for their age get support. Teachers put on extra reading lessons to help them catch up. Pupils read in every subject and say that they read every day at school. However, many are still not keen on reading and do not read outside school. Leaders know that they need to do more to make more pupils enjoy reading.

Pupils say that they like coming to school. However, their attendance is not as good as it was before the pandemic. Leaders are looking at ways to address this issue.

The school's personal, social, health and economic programme helps pupils to prepare for their adult life. This programme covers a wide range of topics, including relationships, diversity and citizenship. Pupils receive helpful careers guidance at various times in their school years. The school has a clear policy for this, which meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Leaders want all pupils to be successful and happy at school. The school looks after disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Leaders ask parents for their views about the support the school provides. Staff adapt teaching and other aspects of school life to make sure that pupils with SEND learn well and can enjoy all activities.

Leaders do their best to make sure that staff do not feel under too much pressure. Teachers and other members of staff say that leaders listen to them and support them if they have issues with their work.

Governors are knowledgeable and committed. They support leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Training for all staff is up to date. All staff understand their duty of care and are confident in identifying and reporting pupils who may need urgent help.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs act swiftly when staff refer issues to them. They are trained in safe recruitment procedures. They work well with families and external agencies to provide support and find solutions to problems.

Pupils are taught how to keep safe. This includes teaching them about online risks and the damaging effects of inappropriate sexual attitudes and language.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new curriculum has only been implemented in full since the start of this academic year. Its introduction coincided with several new teachers and subject leaders starting at the school. While the implementation of the curriculum is successful overall, there are still variations between subjects in terms of the impact on pupils' progress. The school needs to further develop systems to

measure the impact of the new curriculum and ensure that progress is equally strong across all subjects.

- The periods of time when pupils were educated remotely due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions have changed some pupils' and parents' attitudes to attendance. Consequently, the school's strategies to sustain a high level of attendance are not as effective as they used to be. The school's records show that attendance for all groups is not back to pre-pandemic levels. Leaders need to continue to adapt their strategies to secure higher attendance for all groups.
- Promoting a love of reading is a key part of the school's 'literacy for learning' policy. While the objective to have pupils reading in school across the curriculum is broadly met, reading outside school is not widespread. As the literacy policy is in its early implementation phase, the school needs to continue to look for new initiatives to increase the number of pupils who read for pleasure.

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	137231
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10201031
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1106
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Elizabeth Baker
Headteacher	Annette Kimblin
Website	www.lighthall.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Light Hall is a large non-selective academy for pupils aged 11 to 16 years old.
- The headteacher has been in post since 2014.
- A small number of key stage 4 pupils study full time at other institutions. These are: Solihull Academy, Reach, and Aspire.

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 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator. They also spoke with the chair of the governing body and two governors, a school improvement partner and an adviser from Solihull local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements and school records. They discussed safeguarding policies and case studies with DSLs. They talked to teachers and other staff about the safeguarding training they had received and how they put this training into practice. Inspectors looked at safety measures around the school site.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They gathered information about behaviour and attendance. They held formal meetings with groups of pupils. They considered the 107 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 112 free-text responses that were received during the inspection. Inspectors also considered 52 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and 326 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Buckle	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Simpson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sal Yunus	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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