

Inspection of The Calder Learning Trust

Brier Hey Lane, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 5QN

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

At The Calder Learning Trust, pupils are respectful towards each other. Pupils say that they feel safe and they know that adults will help them on the rare occasions when bullying happens. Heads of year refer concerns to a well-trained pastoral team. This ensures that pupils get the social and emotional support they need. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong.

The school's approach to teaching and learning is described as the 'Calder classroom', and is helping pupils to learn in a consistent way. Staff are encouraged to share good practice, supporting pupils to achieve well. Expectations of all pupils are high.

Pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive. Behaviour in classes enables learning to take place uninterrupted. However, pupils' behaviour on the corridors and at social times is not always as positive. Not all staff apply the school policies consistently. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the lessons they receive in form time. All Year 9 pupils are given access to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Pupils are given opportunities to express their views freely. Pupils speak confidently about healthy relationships. They know what a good friend is. They use words such as 'loyal' and 'caring', and understand the importance of being a good listener.

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

Leaders have faced significant challenges in recent years. However, the determination of the leadership team has helped ensure a continued focus on improving the school.

The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced, and allows pupils to know and remember more. Teachers plan together and their opportunities for professional development are helping to deliver lessons that pupils enjoy. For example, in history, pupils learn about industrial Britain through the lens of the local area. In Reception, children are developing their understanding of Spanish words and phrases to develop their love of language. However, the work to link lessons in the primary phase with those in the secondary phase are less developed. Teachers of older pupils do not always embrace opportunities to build on the knowledge and skills taught to younger pupils.

Teachers use assessment accurately to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and address their misconceptions. This is helping pupils to improve their understanding. For example, pupils are using assessment in English to develop their love of reading. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. Most parents and carers agree. The special educational needs coordinator has a clear vision for the pupils in her care. Teachers are benefiting from this expertise. They know these pupils well and make appropriate adaptations to

meet their needs. A 'secondary ready' curriculum is supporting a group of pupils with particular social and emotional needs. The small number of pupils who are supported by the medical needs team are supported effectively by a team of professionals.

Currently, too few pupils in Years 10 and 11 study the group of subjects that collectively make up the English Baccalaureate. However, leaders were able to demonstrate through their planned options process that this is being addressed.

Leaders are aware of the importance of reading. Staff deliver a phonics programme with accuracy and consistency. Leaders use assessment to ensure that the books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they already know. This ensures that almost all pupils leave key stage 1 as confident and fluent readers. Daily story time fosters their love of reading. Leaders from the primary and secondary phases have worked closely to develop a whole-school reading curriculum. Daily phonics teaching ensures that children get off to a strong start with their reading. The school is proud of the use of reading mentors. Pupils in Year 10 provide effective support for pupils in Year 7 to improve their reading.

The early years curriculum is built around books. Staff use this model to engage children in their learning and help them discover the wider world around them. During the inspection, for example, children visited a local supermarket to buy ingredients for the sandwiches they later made for 'the tiger who was coming to tea', prompted by the book by Judith Kerr. Pupils in the primary phase enjoy their lessons and parents agree.

The personal development curriculum is used to promote pupils' character development. There are increasing opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils now have access to a key stage 3 science enrichment club, and all pupils are encouraged to participate in school performances.

Leaders have developed a strong programme of support to help pupils decide on the next steps in their education, employment and training. This includes interviews with local colleges and careers events. The school meets the eight Gatsby benchmarks of good careers guidance.

Leaders take account of staff workload and their well-being. The link between school and home is a particular strength of the school. Parents talk very positively about the way the school interacts with them, and the quality of information that they receive about their child's progress.

Governors meet with leaders regularly. However, they do not have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, they are not always able to challenge leaders effectively. Governors do not check safeguarding records regularly enough, or always discuss safeguarding issues at governing body meetings.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a positive culture of safeguarding. Staff and governors have received the training they need to identify pupils who need help. They have a keen understanding of the risks pupils face, both locally and nationally. Pupils who are at risk are identified quickly and leaders take actions necessary to safeguard them. The records leaders keep are robust. Pupils are aware of whom they should talk to if they are concerned. Pupils use an online reporting system to report incidents to teachers if they feel unsafe. This is helping leaders to identify safeguarding issues quickly and effectively.

During the inspection, minor defects in safeguarding were identified. These were resolved before the inspection ended.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Governors do not monitor the work of leaders with enough rigour. They do not know the strengths and weaknesses of the school in enough detail. As a result, they do not hold leaders to account for the impact of the actions they are taking. Governors' oversight of the school needs to improve. Governors need to ensure that the information they receive from leaders allows them to challenge more effectively.
- In some subjects, such as English, the curriculum is not sequenced between all key stages. While there has been some work in curriculum development, the links between what pupils are expected to know and remember in the primary and secondary phases respectively are not yet fully established. As a result, curriculum progression is not as effective as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum consistently flows from early years through to Year 11.
- Behaviour at the school is good, but not all policies are applied consistently. This is particularly the case with the policy on the use of mobile phones. Pupils and staff are often confused about the expectations of the policy. Leaders should ensure that expectations are clear, fully understood, consistently applied and followed by all pupils and staff.

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	107562
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10200635
Type of school	All-through
School category	Foundation school
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,338
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jean Bradbury
Headteacher	Anthony Guise (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.calderlearningtrust.com
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the sixth-form provision has closed.
- The school opened as an all-through 4–16 school in September 2017.
- The executive headteacher has been in post since 2013, the current head of secondary phase was promoted from deputy headteacher in 2020 and the head of primary phase has been in post since 2017.
- The school has a small number of pupils who access alternative provision at Bradford College and Focus Training.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school is a Beacon School of the UCL Holocaust Education Programme.

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 had 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 spoke with the executive headteacher of the trust, the heads of school, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteachers of the school. They also spoke with a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, science, languages and early reading. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with leaders with responsibility for reading.
- Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for behaviour, and reviewed records of behaviour and attendance.
- Meetings were held with the leader responsible for pupils with SEND. Inspectors also looked at plans for pupils with SEND, including education, health and care plans.
- Meetings were held to discuss safeguarding arrangements, and inspectors scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults working in the school, including the single central record.
- Inspectors visited tutor time and assemblies.
- Inspectors looked at plans for the personal development curriculum and careers information and guidance.
- Meetings were held with the early years leader to discuss curriculum plans and inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils, including in single-sex groups. They also spoke informally to pupils at break- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 126 parents, 146 staff and 46 pupils through surveys, including Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Marc Doyle, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Senior	Ofsted Inspector
Manina Tyler-Mort	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Pearce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynda Florence	Ofsted Inspector

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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

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