

# Inspection of Lincroft Academy

Station Road, Oakley, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 7RE

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 February 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Many pupils enjoy their time at Lincroft Academy. They get on well with their peers and staff. This is not the case for all. Some pupils say their learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that, while they feel safe, a minority of pupils can be silly around the school. Their poor behaviour impacts on others. This was a concern for parents, and a significant minority would not recommend the school. Leaders have started to tackle pupils' concerns but this work has been slowed by the pandemic.

Pupils say that leaders are dealing with poor behaviour when it occurs. Discriminatory language, for instance, is not tolerated when heard by staff. Pupils are pleased that leaders are taking their concerns seriously. For example, pupils report the small amounts of bullying with the knowledge that staff will sort it out and stop it from happening. Leaders are reteaching pupils about their expectations and systems. While behaviour is improving, it is not always good.

Pupils access a wide range of clubs and other experiences. They are excited about the return of trips abroad. Younger pupils have recently started the school's 'PLEDGES' awards scheme which supports their wider development. Pupils are rewarded, for example, when they choose to read widely, support others in their community and take on leadership roles.

Pupils study a broad range of different subjects. The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils in the specialist autism provision, for example, access a bespoke curriculum suited to their needs. There is work to do, however, to make sure the curriculum is implemented well across all subjects.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone significant change from a middle school to a secondary school. Against the challenges of the pandemic, leaders had to work quickly to re-establish school behaviour routines and develop a curriculum that was suitable for secondary school pupils. In September 2021, a new trust took over and the pace of change accelerated.

The principal and his team reviewed and changed the school's curriculum plans. Leaders adapted the curriculum so it was suitable for pupils in both key stage 3 and key stage 4. Many of the school's curriculum plans lay out knowledge in a logical order. In the strongest subjects, curriculum leaders have thought carefully about what is important for pupils to know. This work, however, is uneven and so some curriculum areas are more developed than others. Leaders know what to do to make the plans better but there is more work to do.

While many of the subject plans are well laid out, they are not always used well in class. Some teachers do not pick activities that support learning or build on what pupils already know. For example, assessment is not always clearly linked to the knowledge taught. While there are subjects in the school where pupils are making good progress, these inconsistencies are preventing the curriculum from having the positive impact it should have.

Leaders have taken steps to support pupils who need help with their reading. Pupils who struggle with reading are identified early and get effective support to catch up to their peers. Pupils are reading a wider range of books than before. Leaders' plans to improve the love of reading are starting to have an impact.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. In class, teachers use the detailed 'provision maps' to make helpful adjustments to their lessons to support pupils with SEND. In the specialist provision, pupils have the right academic and emotional support to ensure they succeed in the school and beyond. Where pupils with SEND do not make enough progress, this is a reflection of other issues in the wider school curriculum.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Not all pupils are living up to these high expectations. Leaders have improved the systems and processes to deal with behaviour but not all staff use them consistently well. While many pupils are well behaved, a minority disrupt pupils' learning. Pupils' behaviour still needs to improve.

Pupils access a well-considered careers education programme that effectively guides and supports pupils with their next steps. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is well planned and sequenced. It covers a range of important topics that teach pupils, for instance, to develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships, respect and tolerance. Many pupils value these sessions as a way to discuss and debate important issues. Some pupils, however, do not always take the PSHE lessons seriously despite leaders' best intentions.

School leaders, supported by the trust, have made many recent changes in their drive to improve the school. The pandemic has played a part in delaying the impact of some of these changes. Leaders' plans for the future detail clearly what further work needs to be done to make the school better for everyone.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established clear processes for reporting concerns about pupils. Staff understand and use these for reporting concerns about pupils' well-being.

Safeguarding records show that leaders are quick to respond to any worries that arise about pupils. Leaders work with a range of agencies to ensure pupils and their families get the right support, including those pupils in the specialist provision.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe, including online. Consequently, pupils know what to do if they are sent an inappropriate image or who to tell if they are worried.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not always implemented well. Some teachers do not choose appropriate activities that are linked to the key knowledge pupils need to learn. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure the curriculum they intend is consistently implemented by all.
- Assessment is not always aligned with the key knowledge taught. This means that teachers are not consistently spotting gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders need to ensure that all assessment aligns with the key knowledge taught and that teachers use it regularly to prevent pupils from falling behind with their learning.
- Not all staff have the same high expectations of behaviour as leaders. Some staff do not implement the school's behaviour strategies consistently both in and out of class. As a result, pupils' experiences are affected by the poor behaviour of others. Leaders need to ensure all staff deal with poor behaviour consistently and effectively.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136471
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211278
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	945
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Shirley Jamieson
<b>Principal</b>	Andrew Hencken
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lincroft.beds.sch.uk">http://www.lincroft.beds.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) in September 2021.
- When the school was last inspected, it was a middle school. It converted to a secondary school in 2019.
- There is a specialist resourced provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder on site.
- The school uses registered and unregistered alternative provision.

## 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, geography, mathematics, science and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also visited lessons in other subjects such as computing, food technology, modern foreign languages and PSHE.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors looked closely at safeguarding procedures and processes. Inspectors spoke with governors, trustees, leaders, other staff and a range of pupils about safeguarding in the school.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils from different year groups to talk about their experiences of the school. Inspectors met pupils in both single and mixed-gender groups.
- Inspectors visited the autistic spectrum learning provision. They visited lessons and met with groups of pupils, including some from the provision.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the trust's executive principal, the executive director of the trust for pupils with SEND, the trust's chief executive officer and trustees.
- Inspectors considered the 273 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 98 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 53 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 106 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Georgina Atkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Ahson Mohammed	Ofsted Inspector

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