

Inspection of a good school: Linslade School

Mentmore Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 2PA

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 October 2022

Outcome

Linslade School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides pupils with a supportive and caring environment. Pupils love coming here. They are safe and are well supported by staff. Pupils treat each other very well and say that bullying does not happen. They know that if they were to have any concerns, or if they require extra support, a dedicated pastoral team is always available to help them.

Pupils work well in lessons and are enthusiastic about their learning. They enjoy the wide range of learning opportunities available, such as conducting science experiments. Staff have high expectations and support all pupils to be included and achieve their best.

Pupils are well behaved in lessons and at social times. They move around the site in a calm and orderly way and are polite and respectful. During lessons, pupils are attentive and considerate towards each other. This allows everyone to focus on their learning.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as sports, choir, coding and 'planes, trains and automobiles' clubs. Most pupils access at least one activity a week and talk very positively about the benefits they gain, such as increased confidence.

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

With effective support from Chiltern Learning Trust, leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum. This work is paying off. Pupils remember a lot of what they are taught in most subjects. This is particularly the case in subjects where teachers have broken down topics into smaller chunks. For example, in a tag-rugby lesson, pupils were shown the technique of passing a ball backwards while moving forwards. Pupils then practised this new skill before a group of pupils modelled this technique in a game. All pupils then participated, with the teacher providing targeted feedback to individuals. In a few subjects, leaders have not yet fully broken down the curriculum into smaller parts. Where this is the case, pupils take longer to develop a secure knowledge of key facts and concepts.

Leaders have ensured that lessons are carefully planned, and that information is clearly presented to pupils. Many teachers have very secure subject knowledge. They use a range of strategies to identify pupils' misconceptions and to help pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to know and remember key learning. In a minority of subjects, teachers have not yet had sufficient training to ensure that they choose appropriate strategies to help pupils remember what they have been taught. This means that some pupils are less secure in their learning.

Staff model the behaviours they expect to see in pupils. This has ensured that pupils are courteous and well behaved in lessons and around the school. Pupils like coming to school. Their attendance is high and leaders are quick to act if any pupil does not attend regularly.

A positive reading culture exists throughout the school. Pupils read regularly and are taught important vocabulary that helps them with their comprehension. Pupils enjoy their library lessons and value opportunities to develop their reading fluency, including reading to older peers as part of the 'reading leaders' scheme.

Leaders have prioritised provision for pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about tolerance and respect through informal interactions with staff, around school and in lessons. In each lesson, pupils' cultural awareness is broadened through the school's 'windows to the wider world'. Pupils are confident to stand up for what they believe in and are happy to support each other. Many also benefit from the wide range of leadership opportunities provided, such as those of sports and reading leaders, school council members and 'EPIC leaders'. Pupils develop a strong sense of community. They leave school as confident and respectful individuals.

Parents and carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They particularly value the support of school leaders. Parents praise the education that is delivered, as well as the wide range of additional opportunities that allow their children to 'thrive'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and leaders have ensured that a strong safeguarding culture exists throughout the school. They make sure that adults are properly vetted before they start working with pupils. Staff are well trained and confident in identifying any pupil who may be at risk of harm or need further support. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to stay safe, and online safety is regularly included in lessons.

The safeguarding team works closely with outside agencies where appropriate. This helps to make sure that pupils quickly receive the right support when needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff are not fully secure in their subject-specific pedagogical knowledge. Therefore, they are not consistently ensuring that teaching is designed to help pupils remember information in the long term. This leads to some pupils not being able to recall what they have previously been taught or to connect previous learning with new ideas. Leaders need to ensure that professional development is closely targeted on developing teachers' pedagogical knowledge in the subjects that they teach.
- Sometimes, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to learn and practise smaller components of the curriculum. This leads to gaps in their knowledge or understanding. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers are equipped to make the pedagogical choices that enable all pupils to learn the key curriculum components.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2016.

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.

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	136766
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10227178
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	564
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Pryor
Headteacher	Mark Gibbs
Website	www.linslademiddle.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In June 2018, Linslade School joined the Chiltern Learning Trust.
- In September 2020, a new headteacher was appointed alongside a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and a new assistant headteacher.
- In September 2022, a new head of school was appointed.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- 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 met with representatives from the trust, the headteacher, the head of school, the SENCo and an assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in modern foreign languages, and looked at a sample of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff responsible for the administration of the single central record. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead to discuss the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils. The lead inspector scrutinised the school's safeguarding records. The lead inspector spoke to the governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experience of school, including behaviour and bullying. They also met with leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed 11 pupil responses to Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors took account of 133 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 87 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 34 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jim McAtear

Ofsted Inspector

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