

Inspection of Lowbrook Academy

The Fairway, Cox Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3AR

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Lowbrook Academy as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from attending this inclusive and warm school. They are proud to show their school values of 'happy, healthy, high achievers'. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities that build their character and confidence exceptionally well. They show genuine warmth and kindness in the way they support each other. Pupils are passionate about the importance of being active citizens in the school, encouraging each other to achieve their best.

Pupils are knowledgeable about bullying and know what to do if it happens to them or someone else. They are confident that adults will help them with any issues they may have. However, instances of bullying are extremely rare in the school. Pupils are highly motivated. They consistently demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and around the school. They are proud of their community of respect where everyone is happy and feels safe.

Pupils value the ambitions and expectations that teachers have for them. They meet these expectations because they trust that adults want what is best for them. The ambitions staff have mean that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve very well.

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

From Reception onwards, leaders have high ambitions for what all pupils, including those with SEND, will achieve. There is a common vision for the curriculum, based on leaders' extensive research. In most subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the specific knowledge that pupils will learn and in what order. This is also evident in Reception, where leaders have ensured that children have the knowledge they need before they move to Year 1. There are skilful and meaningful interactions between staff and children in Reception. Staff teach vocabulary and knowledge across all areas of learning exceedingly well.

In a small number of subjects, there is some inconsistency in what teachers expect of pupils and how they match learning to what pupils need to know. While pupils do exceptionally well in end of key stage national tests, this inconsistency means that leaders do not know if pupils in all year groups are building knowledge effectively across the whole curriculum as intended.

Leaders have put in place an effective programme of systematic synthetic phonics for early reading and take care to meet the specific needs of pupils in this school. All staff have been well trained, and quickly spot when pupils have fallen behind. They put in place effective activities that help pupils to read.

Leaders have carefully considered how they help pupils to become positive members of society. As a result, they have worked effectively over the past few years to develop a behaviour management approach which has taught all pupils the skills they need to excel in life. Staff believe in the values of the school, and this means

that they are consistent in their messages about pupils' conduct. Pupils love to learn and genuinely believe that education is important. This is clear to see in their impressive learning behaviours, as well as how they help each other to learn.

A feeling of inclusivity pervades the school. Staff believe in the phrase 'no child is left behind', and this is clear to see in the seamless way they support pupils with SEND in the classroom. Staff have secure knowledge and recognise if pupils have additional needs. This is evident from Reception onwards. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that support for these pupils is of the highest standard. Support plans are effective in helping pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Leaders ensure that all pupils have access to a wide range of experiences. Staff have built a programme of enriching experiences to nurture the talents and interests of all pupils. They actively seek the views of pupils, especially the most disadvantaged, who benefit highly from this approach. Pupils show strong cultural awareness and confidently express how it is important to celebrate difference. They speak with clarity about the human rights of all communities and show strong moral purpose and character.

The vision of senior leaders has inspired those who work in the school. They are well supported, and leaders show great care for the well-being of their staff. Teamwork and pride are clear to see throughout. This is also the case for the governors, who know this school very well and are robust in how they challenge and support leaders to make improvements. However, they do not check consistently that the curriculum is being fully developed in all subject areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to identify and respond to any safeguarding concerns. Staff have the knowledge they need to keep pupils safe. Leaders manage safeguarding records well in the school. They involve external agencies swiftly to get the right support in place for pupils and their families.

All leaders, including governors, have clear oversight for the provision of safeguarding. Leaders make all necessary checks on staff before they start to work at the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both online and in the community. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subject areas, the sequencing of knowledge has not been fully considered by leaders. Where this is the case, there is not a consistent approach to the implementation of the subject and leaders therefore do not know if pupils throughout the school are learning what they should be. Leaders should ensure that there are strong, shared expectations of how their curriculum is delivered in each subject. Governors should check that this work is effective.

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 | 136712 |
| Local authority | Windsor and Maidenhead |
| Inspection number | 10228467 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 330 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Dominique Du Pre and Stuart Muir (Co-Chairs) |
| Principal | Dave Rooney |
| Website | www.lowbrookacademy.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Both the principal and the chair of trustees were in post when the predecessor school was inspected in January 2008. The chair of trustees is now co-chair of governors alongside another co-chair, who has been in post since 2019.
- Lowbrook Academy converted to become an academy school in April 2011. When its predecessor school, Lowbrook Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, in January 2008, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the acting assistant headteacher and other members of the leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and the co-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography (known by the school as 'Place and Time') and religious 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 observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and also took into account their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the arrangements for safeguarding. During these meetings, the lead inspector scrutinised records and sampled case files to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. A team inspector examined the school's work to recruit and check on the suitability of staff. Inspectors also checked the knowledge of staff about their responsibilities.

Inspection team

Nina Marabese, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynn Martin

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Shaughnessy

Ofsted 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 2022