

Inspection of Lindens Primary School

Hundred Acre Road, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 2BB

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 13 years ago and judged 'outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud of their school, their learning and the way they treat each other. They behave exceptionally well. Leaders want the very best for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils meet these expectations consistently, demonstrating growing independence and maturity.

A common refrain from pupils is, 'We love our learning at Lindens.' A common refrain from most parents and carers is, 'Our children thrive here.' Both are right. As in life, a few disagreements between pupils happen. Leaders are quick to offer the right support. This allows pupils to get better at settling these with minimal help. Very occasionally, pupils use unkind words. Leaders do not tolerate this. They record, report and resolve it swiftly and well.

Staff take pupils on a creative and magical journey of learning through the school. Sometimes, in a few foundation subjects, teaching activities are not focused sharply enough on the specific content pupils need to know.

Pupils are powerful advocates for seeing, treating and valuing each other as equals. Pupils demonstrate their ability to see beyond a disability to the individual inside. Pupils convey a strong sense of moral purpose and the ability to make the right decisions through their words and actions.

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

Leaders have created a unique school environment that leads pupils through a journey of discovery, as well as triggering memories. Each nook and cranny along the corridors reveals a different concept, subject or culture. Pupils value these colourful and creative displays. They talk about their purpose and meaning with fondness and clarity. Pupils talk knowledgeably about many of their curriculum subjects too, but not all. Pupils know and remember much in mathematics, history and geography. They are less secure in design and technology, and art and design. This is because leaders have not set out what pupils should learn as clearly in these subjects as they have in others.

School leaders and governors are embracing the support and expertise of the schools within the recently formed Lighthouse Federation. They value the opportunity to give support, as well as seek out new ways of working. Staff feel well supported by leaders. They are appreciative of the development opportunities they are receiving through the federation.

Leaders show excellent expertise in identifying, understanding and providing for the needs of pupils with SEND. They lead by example. Pupils follow. The care,

consideration and empathy pupils show to each other is humbling. Leaders never lose sight of balancing care with learning. Pupils with SEND achieve well. Pupils in the early years share the same traits as their older peers. They learn to be kind and look after each other. They learn to understand and respect similarities and differences, both in themselves and in the world around them. They do this through many varied and interesting topics, supplemented with visits out or visitors coming in. However, leaders have not yet given enough thought to the smaller steps of learning that sit within the topics.

Leaders have given great thought as to how to help pupils quickly grasp the mechanics of reading. Teachers follow the chosen phonics scheme well. They make sure all pupils get the help they need at the moment they need it. Pupils learn to read well. Older pupils like the variety of texts that teachers read to them. The 'treasure box' has a powerful place in their weekly routines. Pupils like the way this helps them to extend their use and understanding of unknown words.

Leaders help pupils to appreciate the power of words. Pupils understand that words can help or hinder, hurt or give happiness. They learn to choose and use them wisely. Pupils are encouraged to think before they speak. They consider questions like, 'Is what you are saying kind? Would you like it to be said to you? Is it going to inspire?' They live out this ability to put thought before words or actions in a way that is special and in a way that puts all pupils, including those with SEND, on an equal basis. This gives meaning and life to pupils' understanding of fundamental British values.

Parents are glad to see visits, clubs and experiences returning following the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders make sure that pupils have a range of opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities. They plan these experiences carefully to link to and extend beyond the curriculum. For example, powerchair football and seated volleyball help all pupils, including pupils with SEND, play sport together. As many parents shared through the inspection, 'It is a wonderful, nurturing environment, where pupils thrive and are taught not just subjects, but are kept on track about what society requires.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make the right checks for staff to be safe to work in schools. The training leaders provide, including through the federation, ensures that staff know how to keep pupils safe and what to do if they have concerns regarding pupils or staff. Records show that staff act on their concerns and that leaders follow these up swiftly if raised.

Leaders have rigorous systems in place to monitor behaviour. They keep a very close eye on all incidents. They wrap nurture and support around pupils. This keeps pupils safe and helps them to know how to behave safely and respectfully.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, including areas of learning within the early years, leaders have not set out clearly enough the specific content they expect pupils to learn. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge or pupils not building up their learning over time sufficiently well. Leaders should ensure that all subjects have the defined pathway of learning set out for them as clearly as they are in history and geography.

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	104212
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10256882
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	461
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Natasha Bournes
Headteacher	Simon Griffiths
Website	www.lindens.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 February 2010 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school childcare on site.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school formally joined the Lighthouse Federation on 1 September 2022.
- The school has a designated unit for pupils with physical disabilities and complex medical needs. The provision caters for pupils of primary-school age. Pupils spend their time between the specialist resource provision and their mainstream classes.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages 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 also spoke to other subject leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects, including art and design, geography, modern foreign languages, and personal, social and health education. For some of these subjects, inspectors also spoke to pupils.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair. They also met with the chief operating officer and the school improvement partner from the executive board.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about pupils' safety.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's evaluation plan and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the views of parents, staff and pupils given in Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors spoke with parents at the school gate and in school.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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