

Inspection of a good school: Linden Road Academy and Hearing Impaired Base

Linden Road, Denton, Tameside M34 6EF

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

Linden Road Academy and Hearing Impaired Base continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Linden Road Academy is a friendly and diverse school, where all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are welcomed.

Pupils are taught by staff to celebrate and value the different faiths and cultures within the school community. Leaders have effective systems to tackle any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe in school.

Pupils work hard to meet the high expectations of their teachers. For example, pupils are keen to collect merits and badges in recognition of their positive behaviour, effort and achievements. They achieve well across the curriculum. Parents and carers told the inspector that they value being invited to weekly celebration assemblies to share in their children's successes.

All pupils play an active role on the school council. This enables them to have a say in how the school is run. For example, pupils recently voted on how money should be spent to improve the school environment, choosing to buy cushions and beanbags for the library.

Older pupils are eager to take on positions of responsibility, such as acting as class prefects. This helps to foster pupils' feelings of belonging to the Linden Road Academy community.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum for pupils, including those who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Leaders have carefully identified and ordered the important knowledge they want children in the early years and pupils across the rest of the school to remember. This enables teachers to design lessons that build on what pupils have learned previously.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which is enhanced through regular training. This helps them to choose suitable approaches and resources to support pupils to learn the intended curriculum. However, from time to time, some teachers do not check sufficiently well whether pupils have understood their prior learning. As a result, some pupils hold misconceptions, which are not identified quickly enough.

Leaders have recently implemented a refined curriculum to teach pupils how to read. They have devised an ambitious plan for children's phonics learning, which starts in the Nursery Year, where staff prepare children well with knowledge about sounds and letters. Staff receive regular training and support to enable them to successfully deliver the phonics curriculum. Pupils practise reading with books that match the sounds they know. However, some pupils in key stage 1 have gaps in their reading knowledge due to weaknesses in the teaching of reading in the past. This is hindering these pupils in becoming confident and fluent readers as quickly as they should.

Leaders ensure that pupils are exposed to a wide variety of books. Teachers carefully select texts to enhance and support pupils' learning across the curriculum, including in the early years. Pupils value and enjoy reading.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify and support pupils with SEND. Those pupils in the specially resourced provision receive the support they need, including specialist support, to access the full curriculum wherever possible. Pupils with SEND participate fully in the daily life of the school.

Teachers ensure that classrooms are positive environments where pupils enjoy learning. Well-established routines and clear expectations help pupils to know how to behave. As a result, disruption to pupils' learning is rare. In the early years, staff teach children about routines and the importance of being polite. Staff quickly build warm and supportive relationships with children to help them to settle in quickly.

Leaders have developed a highly effective programme to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and the importance of looking after their physical and mental health. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about fundamental British values and respecting characteristics, such as race and sex, through the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 explained to the inspector how Boudicca was treated by the Romans and why this would be unacceptable in modern Britain.

Leaders and trustees are considerate of staff's workload. They consider the views of staff and provide resources to promote their positive well-being. Trustees have an accurate oversight of the work of school leaders. They regularly ensure that leaders' actions to improve the school make a positive difference to pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained to identify and report safeguarding concerns. In particular, leaders ensure that those pupils with communication difficulties have suitable methods to communicate their concerns.

Leaders have strong, well-embedded systems to record safeguarding issues. They seek advice and support for vulnerable pupils from a range of external agencies. Staff are tenacious in their efforts to seek additional help for pupils when needed.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. For example, they learn about privacy arrangements and the importance of consent. Pupils trust that adults in the school will listen and help them with any worries. Leaders have created systems, such as the 'worry monster', that encourage pupils to raise issues they are too nervous or embarrassed to discuss.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From time to time, some teachers do not check sufficiently well that pupils have a secure understanding of earlier learning. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions are not resolved quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers are equipped well to use assessment methods effectively to check that pupils' earlier learning is secure.
- Some pupils in key stage 1 have gaps in their reading knowledge due to previous weaknesses in the early reading curriculum. This is preventing them from becoming fluent and confident readers. Leaders should ensure that staff identify and address the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge so that they can catch up quickly.

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 February 2018.

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	141408
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10283620
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jack Harrison
Principal	Peter Greaves
Website	www.lindenroadacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new principal, vice-principal and assistant vice-principal have been appointed.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision for any pupils.
- The school has specially resourced provision for hearing-impaired pupils, with capacity for eight pupils. There are four pupils currently using this provision.
- The school is part of The Enquire Learning Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and a range of staff. She also spoke with representatives of the trust, as well as a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and social times.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. She met with leaders, staff and pupils to understand how pupils are kept safe.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some teachers and pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed children reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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