

Inspection of Linacre Primary School

Thornton Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 5ED

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at this supportive school. They build strong relationships with each other and benefit from the encouragement of the caring staff. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are kind and considerate towards each other. They are welcoming and caring towards pupils who have recently joined the school.

Pupils know that the staff care about them. They trust that staff will help them if they share any worries. Leaders deal with any concerns about bullying promptly. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils are eager to meet leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. They make every effort to model their three simple rules, 'Look after yourself, look after each other, look after our school.'

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. They are starting to benefit from the recently improved curriculum and leaders' higher expectations of what they can achieve. However, in some subjects, pupils, including children in the early years, do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils enjoy visiting places of interest, such as a museum and an art gallery in Liverpool city centre. They value activities such as football and yoga clubs.

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

Over time, leaders, including governors, have not checked for, or acted swiftly enough, to address weaknesses in the curriculum. They have not assessed the impact of their actions to improve the quality of education. As a result, pupils have not benefited from a well-designed curriculum. However, recently, leaders have taken steps to rectify this. They have introduced a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. They have identified the important knowledge that pupils should acquire. In most subjects, they have ordered this knowledge thoughtfully, so that when teachers introduce new ideas, they build well on pupils' previous learning. As a result, pupils are beginning to achieve well in the subjects that leaders have prioritised. However, as this recent work to strengthen the curriculum is not complete for all subjects, in some areas of the curriculum pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

The training which subject leaders have undertaken has improved their expertise and confidence. As a result, in many subjects they now give teachers clear guidance and direction in how to implement curriculums effectively. Typically, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use assessment well to respond to pupils' needs and adapt their teaching to meet them.

In the early years, most children learn to listen attentively and participate enthusiastically in activities. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers implement all aspects of the early years curriculum effectively. Staff do not focus appropriately on developing children's spoken language and vocabulary. As a result, some children make limited progress.

Leaders have successfully introduced a clearly structured phonics programme. From the start of the Reception Year, children learn sounds and letters in daily lessons. Leaders ensure that staff teach the phonics programme consistently well. As a result, most pupils can successfully decode words by the end of Year 1. However, leaders have not given enough thought to the reading curriculum beyond the phonics programme. As a result, the reading curriculum beyond Year 1 does not build well on pupils' strong start. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their comprehension skills or a love of reading. Older pupils who struggle to read do not receive effective support to catch up quickly. Consequently, some pupils lack the confidence to read independently. Many older pupils do not read widely and often.

Leaders have strengthened their systems to ensure that they identify the needs of pupils with SEND early. Teachers have developed their confidence in adapting the curriculum to ensure that these pupils have access to the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are polite, friendly and caring towards each other. The atmosphere throughout the school is calm and purposeful. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts lessons. This means that pupils can concentrate without interruption. Leaders have worked diligently to improve pupils' attendance with some success. However, the irregular attendance of some pupils hampers their learning and limits their achievement.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of diversity in modern British society. Pupils develop empathy for others. They are welcoming and inclusive. They show a keen interest in learning about different beliefs, families and cultures and demonstrate a mature approach to discussions and debate. They understand that they should treat everyone with respect.

Governors are knowledgeable and dedicated. With support from the local authority, they have begun to tackle long-standing weaknesses in the quality of education at the school. A few staff raised concerns about workload. They acknowledged that leaders have engaged with them when they have raised concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff undertake regular safeguarding training to help them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. This has included training in sexually

harmful behaviour. Staff understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe and follow the school policy for reporting their concerns.

Leaders act promptly to address any concerns which staff or pupils raise. They engage with a range of local agencies to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils receive helpful guidance from outside agencies, including the police, to help them to avoid risks in the community. They have a secure understanding of some of the features of healthy relationships, such as consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' expectations of what pupils should learn are not clear enough in some subjects. This hinders teachers when designing learning for pupils and prevents pupils from achieving well. Leaders should ensure that they finalise what pupils should know and remember in all subjects from the early years to Year 6, so that they deepen their knowledge and develop their understanding over time.
- Some pupils do not benefit from effective support to catch up with phonics and early reading skills. This means that they do not become fluent or accurate readers quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that these pupils receive effective support to catch up quickly in reading. In addition, leaders have not ensured that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their reading fluency and comprehension as they move up the school. This means that pupils lack the skills, confidence and motivation to read widely and often. Leaders must ensure that they implement a reading curriculum that develops in pupils the skills that they need to enable them to read independently with interest and motivation.
- Persistent absence and overall absence rates are high. Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. This limits their achievement. Leaders should ensure that they communicate with parents and carers and take effective action to improve pupils' attendance.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff implement the early years curriculum as intended. This prevents some children from getting off to a strong start, particularly in communication and language. Leaders must ensure that staff in the early years are clear about the important knowledge and vocabulary that children need to acquire and remember in readiness for their future learning. In addition, leaders should ensure that staff in the early years have the skills and knowledge to teach the curriculum effectively.
- Over time, leaders, including governors, have not kept a close enough check on the impact of their actions to improve the school. At times, this has meant that some areas of weaknesses have not been addressed with sufficient urgency. Leaders and governors should ensure that they evaluate the effectiveness of actions regularly. This will enable them to adjust their approaches in a timely manner when necessary.

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 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

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| Unique reference number | 104853 |
| Local authority | Sefton |
| Inspection number | 10268208 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 148 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Brenda Lane |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth Gunnion |
| Website | www.linacreprimary.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 27 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast club.
- Leaders do not currently make use of 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 has 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 discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. They spoke with subject leaders and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke with a representative of the local authority and

a consultant headteacher, who the governors have brought in to work with school leaders in consultation with the local authority.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtime. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping children safe. They reviewed documentation, including information about attendance and bullying, and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work and curriculum documents for several other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND and reviewed samples of documentation relating to SEND, including pupils' support plans.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and considered their views, shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included two free-text comments received from parents. The inspector also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff. There were no responses from pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at governing body meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documents.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Frith Murphy

His Majesty's Inspector

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