

Inspection of The Linden Centre

Webb Crescent, Telford TF4 3DU

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The Linden Centre is a welcoming and inclusive school, where pupils are valued as unique individuals. The school's values of 'learning, inspire, nurture, develop, empower and nourish' are well established. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Staff take bullying seriously and deal with any issues quickly.

Pupils who come to this school have often missed a lot of education. Staff focus on understanding pupils' individual needs. They use this knowledge well to develop positive, caring relationships. This helps pupils to re-engage with their education.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff help pupils to behave well. They maintain clear routines and consistently implement the school's behaviour and reward systems. All of this leads to a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere across the school's four sites.

For those pupils who attend the short-stay provision, the home school providers find the work carried out at The Linden Centre to be highly effective. It enables pupils to successfully reintegrate back into their mainstream settings.

Parents are positive about the school and say that the staff are supportive. Parents see notable improvements in their children's learning and behaviour when attending this school.

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

Leaders have carefully considered the design of the curriculum in order to meet the needs of all pupils. In most subjects, leaders have identified what they expect pupils to learn and in what order. Where subject design is strong, most pupils build up the knowledge they need for the next stage of their education. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the knowledge pupils need or the order in which they should learn it. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils do not build on their learning as strongly as they could.

Leaders gain an accurate understanding of pupils' starting points when they join the school. As a result, they know what pupils can do well and where they need extra support. Leaders have appropriate methods in place to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They analyse their needs carefully and provide strong support. This enables pupils to achieve well, both academically and socially. Leaders involve parents and carers closely in deciding on the help that will benefit pupils the most.

Pupils read daily. Leaders have implemented a structured programme to support fluent readers. They also have an effective scheme in place to teach pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. However, a few pupils find their reading books too hard. This is because the text does not match their reading attainment.

Consequently, these pupils find it difficult to develop their reading accuracy and fluency.

Leaders and staff successfully help pupils to manage their own behaviour well. They have established reliable systems to assess how pupils are learning and developing. Their approach places a strong emphasis on assessing pupils' emotions and behaviour first. Teachers then work on strengthening these aspects, so that pupils' can access learning more successfully.

A caring and nurturing approach underpins the way in which staff think about pupils' behaviour. In response, and across all sites, pupils show very high levels of respect towards staff and each other. Leaders and staff promote the importance of school attendance and most pupils attend regularly.

In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils learn to be tolerant of others and develop their understanding of healthy relationships. Opportunities to support pupils' personal development are threaded throughout the curriculum and the school day. Leaders organise a range of trips and visits, including a summer residential trip. Leaders devise career action plans for pupils. These match education and career pathways with pupils' strengths and interests.

Members of the management committee know the school well. They understand their roles and responsibilities and carry them out diligently. As a result, leaders and staff are supported and challenged appropriately to fulfil the school's vision.

Staff speak positively about the school and say that leaders listen to them. They also say that leaders carefully consider their workload and provide help if they need it. Leaders make sure that staff receive relevant training that helps them with their jobs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff are up to date with national and local safeguarding information. Staff know how to record and report any concerns. The designated safeguarding leads are well trained. They have specialisms in specific areas, such as child sexual exploitation.

Leaders work well with a wide range of external agencies involved in pupils' lives. They ensure that pupils receive information about how to keep themselves safe. For instance, pupils learn about healthy relationships and staying safe online.

The correct checks on adults in school are carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum identifies in enough detail the knowledge that pupils should learn from key stage 1 through to key stage 4. This hampers some pupils' progress. Leaders should ensure that all subject curriculums identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn as they move through the school.
- Some pupils find their reading books too hard to read fluently. This is because teachers have not provided these pupils with reading books that carefully match their phonics knowledge. Leaders should ensure that pupils read books that are aligned closely to their phonics knowledge, so they can become more fluent and accurate readers.

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	123349
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10268020
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kirsty Osman
Headteacher	Darren Lennon
Website	www.lindencentre.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Linden Centre has two short-stay assessment provisions for permanently excluded pupils or pupils at risk of exclusion from school. Pupils that attend the two specialist provisions all have an education, health and care plan.
- The school operates over four sites within the Telford and Wrekin area.
- The school's body of governance is known as the management committee.
- Leaders do not make use of 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

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