

Inspection of Lime Tree Primary Academy

Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 5QN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The interim headteacher of this school is Clare Lewis. This school is part of Tennyson Learning Community, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by chief executive officer, Hilary Power, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Cathy Stormonth.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils take great pride in being part of this school. They are kind and welcoming. They delight in showing their good manners around the school, such as by holding open doors without prompting. From the early years, children show great consideration for each other.

In lessons, pupils behave well and are attentive. They know their teachers want them to do well. However, pupils have not always achieved as well as they should. They work quietly with whatever tasks their teachers give them. They explore new vocabulary and learn new skills. Occasionally, these tasks are a bit too complicated. When this happens, pupils wait sensibly for help or willingly have a go but do not do as well as they could.

Pupils are happy and safe at breaktimes. Pupils are confident that their teachers will intervene to stop any unkindness when they know about it. At lunchtime, pupils play games such as basketball together. They can enjoy a good book in the library or come indoors to socialise in a quieter setting.

Pupils enjoy helping around the school. Pupil ambassadors are happy to show visitors around. Librarians help to organise the library which has been recently restocked with high-quality texts.

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

The trust has a clear, ambitious vision for the school. Working with governors and staff, they are making the right changes to improve things for pupils. They are building a committed team with pupils at the heart of their work.

The curriculum is developing rapidly. Where the curriculum is most effective, the school's planning is detailed and sets out what pupils will learn and need to know at every stage. In these subjects, teachers get the right training and support to teach the curriculum well. They check what pupils have understood and remembered before introducing new ideas. Teachers provide the right resources to help pupils understand tricky concepts. They give pupils plenty of practice with key skills, such as number bonds, to help them become confident and fluent. In these subjects, pupils are developing their knowledge well from their starting points. They make strong progress.

In subjects where the curriculum has been introduced more recently, there is more to do to ensure that leaders' planning is sufficiently clear about the most important learning and how to check that pupils know and remember this. In these subjects, teachers do not always make adjustments to take account of what pupils already know or any gaps in their learning. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects.

In the early years, the curriculum ensures that children have a wide range of provision to build new skills and follow their interests. From Nursery, adults use interesting activities, songs and stories to enrich children's language skills. The teaching of early reading skills has been a priority for the school. Staff have the expertise and resources to teach children to read. Adults check regularly on pupils' progress. They make sure that pupils have lessons and read books that are at the right level for them to practise and develop their reading skills. They provide extra help for children who fall behind in learning to read. Most pupils learn to read well.

The school plans its support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A few pupils get bespoke support. A range of interventions are in place to address key skills in number and reading, including for pupils with SEND. Adults give extra help and explanations in class for most pupils with SEND. Most pupils with SEND join in lessons with their peers. They occasionally struggle to access the tasks they are given. Staff check how pupils with SEND are faring in lessons. However, systems to evaluate how well the support in place is improving outcomes for pupils with SEND overall are not well established. As a result, the school, sometimes, does not spot where further staff training or adjustments would help pupils with SEND achieve even more.

Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around the school. Children learn the behaviour routines from the early years. For example, they cheerfully share their bikes and toys. They learn to concentrate and persevere. Older pupils learn about teamwork and resilience in lessons and extra sporting opportunities and clubs. Despite all that is available to them in school, some pupils are absent too frequently. The school is aware of this and taking action, but there is more to do to secure regular attendance for these pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Where curriculum plans have been introduced more recently, teachers do not always adapt tasks well enough to enable all pupils to focus on, and develop a secure understanding of, the most important knowledge. When this happens, pupils develop gaps in their understanding or do not achieve as well as they should. The school should ensure that staff are clear about what pupils need to know and have the expertise to teach this effectively.
- Systems to evaluate the effectiveness of changes in provision, including for pupils with SEND, are not well developed or consistently applied. As a result, the school sometimes does not identify what is working well or where to make improvements. The school should ensure that it checks effectively on how well pupils are faring and make changes to provision as required.

- Despite the school's efforts to encourage regular attendance, some pupils are missing too much time in school. These pupils miss out on the academic and social opportunities available to them. This makes it hard for them to keep up with their learning and friendships. The school should further strengthen their work with families to improve attendance for these pupils.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148227
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10295127
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	316
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cathy Stormonth
CEO of the trust	Hilary Power
Headteacher	Clare Lewis (Interim Headteacher)
Website	www.limetree.academy
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use any off-site providers of alternative education.
- The school opened in 2021 as part of the Tennyson Learning Community. When the predecessor school, Hawthorn Park Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the chair of trustees and other

trustees, the chair of governors and another governor, the chief executive officer and the director of education. The lead inspector also spoke with an external advisory professional linked to the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at some samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View and other communications. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michele Geddes

Ofsted Inspector

Joe Creswick

Ofsted Inspector

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