

Inspection of Lower Farm Academy

Milking Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 0FG

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 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 headteacher of this school is Andrew How. This school is part of Reach2 Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring school where pupils feel happy and safe. Staff know the needs of their pupils well and make sure every pupil feels included and successful. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They show enthusiasm and interest in their work. Staff have high expectations for the achievement of all of their pupils. This is evident in pupils' outcomes across subjects.

The school values are shared by everyone. These values lie at the heart of the school's work and support everyone to promote pupils' achievement and wider development. Pupils know these values well and use them to guide their behaviour. Teachers mostly support and guide pupils to behave well in lessons. Pupils report that there is little bullying or other forms of unkind behaviour. When incidents do happen, pupils are confident that staff will quickly sort things out. Pupils play well together at lunchtimes and playtimes.

Pupils benefit from attending a wide range of clubs. They enjoy these clubs, which develop their interests and talents. Pupils aspire to become a member of the 'Pupil Parliament', which develops their understanding of democracy and helps them contribute widely to life at the academy.

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

Pupils develop a secure understanding of the curriculum, particularly in subjects such as art and design and mathematics. This is because the curriculum is well planned. It has steps that teachers use effectively to ensure pupils learn knowledge in the right order so that they fully understand the curriculum and achieve well. Teachers check on the progress pupils' make in lessons to address any errors.

In a few subjects, pupils' knowledge of the curriculum is not so strong. This is because, in these subjects, some of the explanations do not help pupils understand what they are learning or remember the important vocabulary the school thinks pupils need to know. At other times, it is because the tasks teachers sometimes set pupils can limit their understanding. On these occasions, this prevents pupils from forming a deeper understanding of some subjects or recalling knowledge they have learned before.

Pupils are taught to read well. Teachers are skilled at teaching phonics. The school checks carefully on the progress of pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read to identify those who are at danger of falling behind. Where there is a risk of this, swift and effective support is provided. Pupils enjoy choosing and reading books from the growing range in the library. A collection of books has been selected, which teachers read to their classes to ensure pupils experience some of the best books on hand. Pupils enjoy these story sessions. All this helps pupils to become confident readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Successful and carefully considered adaptations are made to ensure pupils with SEND understand the curriculum and are involved in all parts of school life. The school keeps a check on the progress of pupils with SEND. The strong systems in place successfully support staff to help pupils with SEND succeed and achieve well.

Children make a positive start in the early years. Indoor and outdoor spaces are well organised and support children with opportunities to play and explore in places such as the forest school. Children are interested in these stimulating activities. Most tasks support children's learning well. They help prepare children to make a good start in most areas of the Year 1 curriculum. Staff in the early years are caring and form supportive relationships with the children.

Pupils' personal development is well promoted. Pupils talk with understanding about fundamental British values. The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of how to be healthy and become active citizens. The trips pupils take part in also add to their learning in positive ways.

Leaders are committed and enthusiastic. They provide a lot of support for staff to help them deliver the curriculum effectively and support pupils' wider needs. Staff feel that leaders manage their workload well, are supportive and have created a positive place to work.

Most policies and practices are well implemented. However, in some cases, leaders have not identified the things that need to improve next. This is because subject leaders do not always have a clear enough grasp of how things are going in their areas of responsibility.

Governors are committed. They know the school well, check on its work systematically and ask leaders questions to help things improve further. Trustees keep a careful eye on the school's performance and provide the necessary support it needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school's choice of learning activities, or the explanations given, means that pupils' knowledge is not fully developed across the curriculum. The school should extend teachers' subject knowledge and skills in order to enhance the teaching of the curriculum.

- Some leaders do not always have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas they need to improve in their subjects. This means that the most immediate steps for improvement are not always tackled well enough. The school should support subject leaders to develop a sharper view of performance in their subjects to help them tackle the most important steps first.

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	147078
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10294650
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	286
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Robert
CEO of the trust	Cathie Paine
Headteacher	Andrew How
Website	https://lowerfarmacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a free school that opened in September 2019.
- The academy is part of the REACH2 Academy Trust.
- The academy currently has pupils in nursery to Year 4.
- The academy will admit one additional cohort of pupils at the start of each new academic year.
- The academy intends to have the full primary age range of pupils on roll at the start of September 2025.
- The academy does not make use of alternative provision.
- The academy runs a breakfast club.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy director of education of Reach2 Academy Trust, and subject and pastoral leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. 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 looked at samples of pupils' work in a range of other subjects, including geography and science.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons around the academy.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the academy's self-evaluation plan and information from the academy's website.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about life at the academy. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of the views of staff, pupils and parents. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start and end of the day.

Inspection team

Jonathan Moore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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