

Inspection of Lace Hill Academy

Catchpin Street, Lace Hill, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire MK18 7RR

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Jones. This school is part of Campfire Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Mitchell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Liam Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils appreciate how kind and welcoming everyone is at this school. They consider staff to be helpful and fair. Behaviour in class and around the school is good, and pupils are keen to contribute to the very positive atmosphere. They are proud of each other and enjoy finding out about the different cultures and backgrounds of their classmates.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how their actions affect others. They want to help to make sure that everyone can enjoy their time at school. If pupils do have worries, they know who to talk to. They are certain that staff will do everything they can to help.

Pupils recognise the high expectations and ambition that leaders have for them. This inspires them to consider their own futures. This is helped by the school's careers fair and well-structured teaching about the wider world. Pupils feel well prepared for their next stages of education. The teaching of the school's curriculum helps pupils to look forward to the opportunities which lie ahead. Pupils in Year 6 feel ready for secondary school because they have a range of strategies for any challenges they may face.

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

A purposeful and highly ambitious curriculum, coupled with wide-ranging additional opportunities, results in pupils receiving an interesting and exciting education. The school has thoughtful transition processes in place. These ensure staff know the individual needs of pupils as they move to the next stage of learning, whether this is moving up from Nursery, between reading groups or into their new class at the start of a new year.

The school has developed a curriculum with distinct long-term aims that build from Nursery to Year 6. These aims are carefully adapted and fit the needs of pupils well. Because this approach is consistent, pupils understand that they need to keep building their knowledge and skills over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from appropriate support to ensure that they access the same learning as their classmates. The needs of pupils with SEND are well understood. Details of how best to support them are precise and regularly checked. As a result, pupils with SEND have the help they need to do their best.

In most subjects, activities support learning efficiently. However, where there is ongoing subject development, the curriculum is currently less precise in identifying specifically what pupils will learn and when. As a result, some activities do not help pupils to carefully build their knowledge and understanding. The school is prioritising training and support for staff to ensure pupils learn consistently well across the school's full curriculum.

Pupils who need additional support benefit from the early morning intervention sessions on offer. Pupils enjoy coming in for extra help, and this provision is welcomed by families as they see their children's confidence grow. Leaders frequently check the impact of these sessions for each pupil to ensure pupils are catching up as intended.

Pupils identify reading as one of the central aspects of their learning. Consistent phonics teaching means that pupils quickly grow in confidence as they learn to read. Those who find reading more difficult are sensitively supported. In class, books are selected to expose pupils to different cultures and people. Books that explore diversity are easily identifiable in the library and are some of the books pupils most want to read. Children's communication and language are systematically developed in Nursery. Staff engage children in rich conversations to thoughtfully boost each child's vocabulary.

Staff know families well, and parents are very positive about the school. When needed, leaders work with outside agencies to ensure pupils, and their families, get the right support at the right time. The school ensures that all pupils are supported to attend regularly and to understand why coming to school each day is important.

The provision for pupils' wider personal development is exceptional. A focus on respect, resilience and integrity thread through learning from early years onwards. Pupils' confidence and empathy are supported by the school's 'Nurture Club'. Their broader interests are strengthened through a range of clubs and activities. Pupils take part in local initiatives ranging from bulb planting to performances in a local care home. These help them to feel very connected to their community.

Pupils have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. 'Well-being Champions' proudly support their peers if they have a worry or have no one to play with. Pupils are knowledgeable about diversity and are well prepared to challenge discrimination.

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 small number of subjects, the school has not yet precisely identified what teachers will teach and when they need to teach it. This means some learning activities do not always help pupils build knowledge as well as they could across all subjects. The school must continue to strengthen and refine the curriculum further so that all pupils achieve well across the whole curriculum.

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	140207
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10296392
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Liam Harrison
CEO of trust	Sarah Mitchell
Headteacher	Sarah Jones
Website	www.lacehillacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Campfire Education Trust.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative education provision.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the early years leader, curriculum leaders and other staff.

- The inspectors met with governors, including the chair of governors. They also spoke to the chair of trustees and CEO.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computer science and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read. The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- 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 inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ed Mather, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Britnell

Ofsted Inspector

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