

Inspection of a good school: Linden Lodge School

61 Princes Way, Wimbledon Park, London SW19 6JB

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

Outcome

Linden Lodge School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Linden Lodge School is a school where pupils are well cared for. Strong relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel happy and become confident learners.

The school is built on a three-acre site around a manor house. The grounds are well used to help pupils with visual impairment to move around independently.

Pupils' personal development is a large part of school life. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in clubs and activities, such as yoga and dance. Pupils benefit from comprehensive support for their mental health. This means they feel safe, settled and ready to learn.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They are considerate of each other's needs and engage very well with their learning. They have positive attitudes to their education. Lessons are not affected by disruption since staff support pupils to understand and manage their emotions. Pupils are confident that if bullying happens, staff will deal with it quickly and effectively.

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

Many pupils in the school are not ready for the national curriculum and follow a personalised programme. Leaders have structured the curriculum into four pathways. The more informal pathways provide suitable learning opportunities for pupils. Pupils' sensory and communication needs are well provided for through these pathways. For those who can access a more formal curriculum, learning is tracked against the national curriculum.

Staff have a high level of specialist knowledge relating to the range of pupils' complex needs. They use a range of approaches, such as signing, technology and Braille to help pupils to succeed. Therapies are incredibly well embedded in lessons. This ensures that pupils' physical needs are met from within the curriculum rather than being a diversion from it.

Most parents and carers are pleased with their child's progress, and like the way the curriculum is adapted to suit pupils' needs. They value the commitment of leaders and staff in helping their child to succeed. Many parents used words such as 'tremendous' and 'compassionate' to describe the support their children receive. A small minority of parents commented that pupils could be challenged more in lessons.

Although leaders and teachers are clear about what skills need to be taught, leaders have yet to set out what order these should be taught in. This makes it hard for teachers to ensure that learning is always building on what pupils already know and can do.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that promote their personal development and enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils enjoy massage and swimming to support their physical and mental health. This means they feel calm and secure, and are ready to participate in lessons. Consequently, low-level disruption rarely gets in the way of learning.

Staff have implemented a revised reading and phonics programme. This has been adapted for pupils with visual or hearing impairments. As a result, pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read are developing their phonics skills and reading fluency.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. This prepares them well for the later stages of their education. Leaders make sure that they know the nature of children's additional needs. Children settle quickly because staff establish clear routines and expectations. They adapt the learning environment to suit children's needs. They pay careful attention to children's sensory needs.

Older pupils benefit from a careers programme that prepares them for the world of work and adult life. They have opportunities to engage with the local community, and undertake extensive work experience with local employers. This helps pupils to develop independence, and to learn to look after themselves.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its leadership. They feel that senior leaders look after them well. Most feel that workload is manageable and that leaders carefully consider their well-being. Staff particularly value the support in place to help them take care of their mental health. Leaders recognise individual staff members' strengths. This results in a staff team that feels valued and can work together in the best interests of the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have embedded a strong culture for keeping pupils safe. All staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Because they have been trained well, they know the signs that pupils might need extra help. Staff pass on concerns to leaders, who deal with these appropriately.

Leaders work effectively with external professionals and agencies to ensure that action is taken to keep pupils safe. Pre-employment checks on staff are carried out thoroughly. On occasion, records of these checks are less thoroughly kept than they should be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The more formal curriculums are not sequenced as well as they could be. As a result, teaching does not consistently build on pupils' prior skills or knowledge. This makes it difficult for staff to check pupils' understanding and identify what they need to learn next. Leaders should ensure that there is a clear sequence of learning for all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Linden Lodge School, to be good in January 2017.

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	145709
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10255428
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	35
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governors	Kieran Travers (Co-Chair) Rupert Marks (Co-Chair)
Headteacher	Monika Gaweda (Co-Headteacher) Sarah Norris (Co-Headteacher)
Website	www.lindenlodge.wandsworth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Linden Lodge School converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Linden Lodge School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including visual impairment, hearing impairment, epilepsy and cerebral palsy. Many children have profound and multiple physical disabilities as well as educational needs.
- Linden Lodge School accepts pupils from a wide range of local authorities in London and the South East.
- The school has boarding provision on site for 17 pupils, although it has capacity for more. This provision was last inspected in January 2022 and judged to be good. The provision was not part of this inspection.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the two headteachers and other leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, music, and personal, social and health education. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors held discussions with teachers, teaching assistants and governors.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils at various points during the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records relating to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tom Canning

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023