

Inspection of a good school: Limehurst Academy

Bridge Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1NH

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 April 2022

Outcome

Limehurst Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are unanimous in their praise of Limehurst Academy. They feel lucky to learn in a caring environment that helps them feel happy and safe. They celebrate the cultural diversity within the school. They said that this diversity adds richness to their education and helps them to be better prepared for life.

Pupils are polite and respectful. In lessons, their conduct is exemplary. They are excited to learn. The 'improve, move, remove' behaviour system is consistently applied by teachers. This system works well. Although pupils said that bullying can happen, they also said that they have complete faith that any issues would be quickly resolved. A typical view of pupils was: 'This is a happy school where everyone is known.'

Leaders know the school well. They are ambitious for its continued improvement. Teachers demand the very best. They are determined that all pupils can access the same opportunities. Pupils live up to these expectations. They achieve well and thrive at the school.

After school, pupils gain experiences that would not normally be available to them. They join clubs, visit new places, experience new sports and play for teams. Pupils are proud to wear their Limehurst Academy badge.

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Teachers are determined that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), succeed. In most subjects, the curriculum is skilfully planned. Teachers ensure that pupils' knowledge carefully builds on previous learning. Teachers plan learning to ensure that pupils remember crucial knowledge. In a few subjects, the curriculum is new and not fully embedded.

Leaders have adapted the curriculum in response to COVID-19. They have precisely identified where pupils have additional learning needs as a result of the pandemic. They are helping to rebuild pupils' knowledge and skills. They are encouraging the return of pupils' enjoyment and love of learning. In modern foreign languages, for example, pupils have received expert support to regain their confidence to speak in a foreign language. In English, pupils are reading aloud with conviction. In physical education (PE), pupils are regaining their fitness and are enjoying sport again.

Pupils who have fallen behind in reading are quickly identified. Precise checks take place to ensure that they receive the correct help. Pupils quickly build reading confidence and fluency. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive ongoing specialist support to access the curriculum. These pupils achieve well.

Leaders have identified assessment as a focus for further development. In some subjects, assessment helps teachers to adapt learning. It ensures that all pupils learn as they should. In others, assessment is not as precise as is needed.

Teachers present information clearly. Their questioning is skilful. Pupils learn how to listen carefully. They are challenged to extend a verbal or written response. Pupils with SEND cited many ways in which teachers adapt their learning so that they are helped to be independent and succeed.

Pupils benefit from a rich personal development curriculum. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education. The careers advice and guidance programme is effective. Initiatives such as 'job of the week' and 'speedy speakers' educate pupils about their future options. Pupils said that they had previously underestimated what they might achieve in the future and now want to 'aim higher'.

Leaders encourage staff to develop their expertise. They enable teachers to test out new ideas and then put them into practice. Teachers are ambitious. They are experts in the subjects that they teach. They engage in research and training. They believe that they are well led. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of vigilance and care in the school. Leaders are determined to safeguard pupils' welfare. An expert team of staff provides support and professional guidance to pupils. Pupils particularly appreciate the way in which they can use the school website to flag their concerns or worries anonymously. They say that they know that 'someone is there for them'.

Year 10 pupils have been trained as mentors in violence prevention. Their mission is to equip pupils with strategies to keep safe and de-escalate tricky situations.

The single central record meets statutory requirements. Recruitment processes are robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not fully developed in all subjects. In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. Teaching does not always help pupils to learn and remember important knowledge. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they could in a few of the subjects they study. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is fully developed and consistently implemented in all subjects.
- In some subjects, assessment is not used effectively to support pupils' learning. There is not a close enough connection between assessment and the curriculum. This means that pupils' learning gaps are not accurately pinpointed in these subjects. Their next steps in learning are not identified quickly enough. Leaders must continue their work to ensure that assessment is used intelligently in all subjects. They must ensure that what is being taught is being learned.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 30 April 2013.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	137367
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10227844
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	613
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Trust	Andrew Hindmarsh
Headteacher	Jonathan Mellor
Website	http://www.limehurst.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school joined the East Midlands Education Trust (EMET) in January 2021.
- A small number of pupils receive their education in the following alternative provision: Clover Learning Community, Invent Learning, Go-Getta and Generational Youth. These providers are unregistered.

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.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, members of the governing body, representatives of the trust, subject leaders and groups of staff.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives in English, modern foreign languages and PE. As part of the deep dives, inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited lessons, considered pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders and pupils to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised a range of records relating to

safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. They met with groups of pupils to discuss their wider personal development.

- Inspectors spoke with representatives from alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils at different times of the school day, including the start and end of day and breaktime.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, parents and pupils through discussions during the inspection and Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Aoife Galletly

Her Majesty's Inspector

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