

Inspection of Lindsworth School

Monyhull Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 3QA

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where staff provide high-quality care for pupils. Relationships are strong throughout the school. Pupils trust staff to help and support them. When issues such as bullying arise, staff deal with them well. Pupils are safe in school and most enjoy attending.

Leaders and staff are determined that all pupils should achieve well academically. Pupils study a full range of subjects in all years. Their learning usually builds well from year to year. However, some pupils could be doing better. This is because staff do not consistently take into account pupils' full range of additional difficulties when planning and delivering learning.

Pupils' difficulties often result in challenging behaviours. However, staff manage behaviour well. Over time, the support that the school provides helps pupils to learn how to understand their feelings and manage their own behaviour.

The school has a strong focus on preparing pupils for life after school. Its aim is for pupils to have appropriate qualifications, alongside the skills and attitudes they need to thrive in their next stage of education. The school is successful in this aim. For example, almost all pupils move to further education or training when they leave.

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

The school is well led. The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong, principled leadership. They know the school well, including its strengths and the areas that need to improve. Following a period of turbulence, leaders and governors have set the school on a trajectory of improvement.

The school's staff share leaders' commitment to providing the best possible education for pupils. Staff appreciate leaders' work to improve the school and their efforts to ensure that workload is manageable. Working at Lindsworth is demanding because of the challenging behaviours that pupils often exhibit. However, staff are proud to belong to the school. They support each other and enjoy their work.

Leaders and teachers have worked hard to develop the curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects in key stages 2 and 3. Older pupils choose options that interest them. Most achieve well. Pupils in Year 11 spend one day each week studying for a vocational qualification at an alternative provision. This helps pupils in their transition from school to college.

The curriculum is well planned in all subjects. Pupils are taught new knowledge in a sensible order so that their learning builds steadily. Staff regularly revisit key knowledge, and this helps pupils to remember it. However, staff do not consistently teach the curriculum as effectively as they could. For example, they do not always present information in a way that pupils understand. They do not always check pupils' understanding effectively.

All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) with their primary need identified as social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). Staff plan well to address this primary need. However, many pupils have other needs, such as difficulties with communication and understanding. Staff are not always sufficiently aware of these needs. They do not plan to meet these needs consistently well. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Reading is promoted effectively throughout the school. Staff are determined that all pupils should be proficient readers and should enjoy reading. They provide good support for pupils who find reading difficult.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. There is a comprehensive and well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Pupils receive high-quality, personalised careers education that helps them make informed decisions about their future. The school provides a wide range of activities and off-site visits. These help to broaden pupils' horizons and develop their self-confidence and character.

Leaders have put in place effective procedures to support parents and carers. For example, too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This is partly a legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders are acutely aware of this issue. Staff telephone and visit families regularly to encourage better attendance. A small number of parents believe that the school does not support them or their children well. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know that keeping pupils safe is their top priority. All staff are well trained and alert to the signs that pupils might need extra help. Staff pass on to leaders any concerns they have, and leaders deal with these appropriately. They involve external agencies when needed. Leaders endeavour to make sure that pupils get the support they need in a timely manner.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. Many praised the school's pastoral staff to inspectors. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This aspect of the curriculum is comprehensive. The school has an effective focus on helping pupils to maintain positive mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are not sufficiently aware of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) beyond their primary need of SEMH. Consequently, staff do not consistently take account of all pupils' needs when planning learning. This means

that pupils sometimes do not make as much progress as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff understand pupils' full range of SEND. They should ensure that staff make good use of this understanding when planning learning.

- Staff do not always use the most effective approaches when teaching the curriculum. When this is the case, pupils do not grasp new content or concepts as quickly or effectively as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff consistently use effective approaches that help pupils to understand and remember what they are taught.

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	103632
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10227287
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gillian Gregory
Headteacher	Kate Beale
Website	www.lindsworth.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Lindsworth caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have other needs such as autism spectrum disorder, communication difficulties and learning difficulties. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school started admitting pupils into Years 5 and 6 in January 2018. Previously, the school catered only for pupils of secondary age.
- The school defederated from another special school in October 2020. A new governing body was formed at this time.
- The executive headteacher left the school in December 2020. The previous head of school became the headteacher on 1 January 2021.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions. All pupils in Year 11 spend one day each week at one of these provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 the headteacher, other senior leaders and the chair of the governing body. They spoke to a consultant commissioned by the local authority to provide support for the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead. They scrutinised policies and records relating to child protection and examined the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school.
- An inspector visited an alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire. They met with two groups of staff.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. They observed the school at these times. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors visited year group meetings that are held at the end of each day.
- Inspectors considered the responses, including written responses, to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire. They held telephone conversations with two parents.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Pollitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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