

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Lode Heath School

Lode Lane, Solihull, West Midlands B91 2HW

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

Outcome

Lode Heath School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Laura Suddon. This school is part of Arden Multi 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 (CEO), Martin Murphy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Celia O'Donovan. There is also an executive headteacher, Damian Burgess, who is responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Lode Heath is a school which places significant value on supportive and positive relationships. As a result, pupils know that adults in the school will support them with their learning and in their development as young people. This means the school is a harmonious community committed to living out its 'Stars' values: sincere, thoughtful, aspirational, resilient and solidarity.

The school is aspirational for all its pupils. It ensures all pupils have the support they need to succeed. Pupils value this and typically seek to do their best in their learning. They speak highly of the support the school provides, for example the homework club. The school has high expectations for behaviour and is a respectful and cohesive community. Pupils understand how the school expects them to conduct themselves as these values are taught explicitly.

Pupils enjoy the many clubs and trips that the school offers. These include a range of sports and performing arts clubs, as well as visits and residential trips in this country and abroad. They especially speak highly of the many events the school organises for their families, including fish and chip suppers and the awards celebrations.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum with the English Baccalaureate at its

heart. The key knowledge pupils need is clearly identified, as well as the order in which pupils should learn it. Teachers generally check pupils' learning well. They design a selection of activities which build on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils learn the intended curriculum and achieve well. However, there remain some inconsistencies in a small number of subjects. This is mainly when the selection of task, explanation of learning or checking understanding are less precise. In these cases, gaps in learning can persist and, occasionally, pupils lose focus.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a significant strength of the school. These pupils have their needs precisely identified. The school makes certain that staff have the guidance and assistance they need to support their learning. This means that the curriculum is adapted systematically and appropriately for these pupils. Consequently, they achieve very well.

The school has a programme for pupils whose reading needs support. This programme supports many of these pupils to read well effectively. However, there remain pupils who need further help to read with appropriate fluency to access the curriculum fully. The school is working to establish a wider reading culture for all pupils.

The school has successfully ensured that pupils' attendance remains high. Leaders analyse attendance information closely and rapidly identify concerns. They work thoughtfully with pupils and families to secure the necessary improvements in attendance.

The school's expectations for pupils' behaviour are clear. Thanks to regular review and a comprehensive induction programme, pupils understand these and why they are important. The school has an overview of pupils who find it harder to meet its expectations. Effective and personalised action is taken to support these pupils with their choices.

The school has extensively reviewed its provision for the pupils' personal development. This includes a fortnightly session dedicated to pupils' character and personal development as well as external visitors. The school ensures these opportunities are responsive to pupils' needs. The school has well-developed provision for pupils' careers education. This includes two opportunities for work experience. The school ensures that more vulnerable pupils have the support they need to access appropriately ambitious destinations.

Leaders at all levels of the school have a clear understanding of their areas of responsibility and the next steps in the development of provision. The trust has supported the school in a variety of imaginative ways to refine and further improve practice. Governors are very well informed about the school and offer support and challenge. Leaders engage well with staff around well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There remains some variability in the quality of curriculum implementation in a small number of subjects. This includes inconsistencies in the selection of task and the use of assessment. This means some pupils are not learning as well as they do elsewhere in the curriculum. The school should ensure the curriculum is implemented consistently so pupils know more and remember more across all curriculum subjects.
- The school's reading strategy is new and not yet fully effective. As a result, there remain some pupils who need ongoing support with their reading to be able to access the curriculum securely, as well as further work to embed a wider culture of reading throughout the school. The school should continue to support staff to deliver and embed its reading strategy both for these key pupils and across the school.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

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	137008
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10343955
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,164
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Celia O'Donovan
CEO of the trust	Martin Murphy
Headteacher	Laura Suddon
Website	www.lodeheathschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Arden Multi Academy Trust. There are six academies in the trust.
- The school uses four registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- 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.

- As part of this inspection, the inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching staff and other employees in the school. Inspectors also talked informally to pupils to gather general information about school life. The lead inspector also met the trust's executive headteacher, CEO, trustees and governors. Governor minutes were scrutinised.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors discussed with leaders and pupils the school's extra-curricular activities, enrichment programme and their careers and personal development programmes.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records with school leaders.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including plans to improve the school.
- The inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, at various points in the inspection. They took account of responses to Ofsted online surveys for staff and pupils, Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dan Robinson

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