

Inspection of Lime Tree Primary Academy

Budworth Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 2RP

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Clare Larkin. This school is part of Bright Futures Educational 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), John Stephens CBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel Rubin.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Lime Tree Primary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Lime Tree Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as Lime Tree Primary Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils play a large part in making Lime Tree Primary Academy the welcoming community that it is. They make every effort to rise to the school's high expectations of both behaviour and achievement. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and embodies the school's motto, 'a place where everyone loves to learn'. They proudly wear their 'star behaviour' lanyards in recognition of their excellent attitudes to school life. Pupils achieve well across a range of subjects and thrive socially. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They are exceptionally well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

Through leadership roles, such as well-being and eco ambassadors, pupils learn to make a positive difference. They learn to care for the school's tortoises and fish, and enjoy spending time with Kir, the school dog. Pupils use vegetables grown at the school, and eggs laid by the school chickens, as ingredients in their cooking. They are proud to showcase their singing and sporting talents in the local community. These opportunities help to build pupils' confidence and make them happy.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about the vast range of trips and clubs on offer. They value the activities that they access in 'the avenue', such as chess, piano and art. These experiences enable pupils to discover exciting new interests and undiscovered talents.

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

The school has developed an engaging and ambitious curriculum. It has carefully considered the knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which they will learn it from the early years to Year 6.

Working closely with parents and carers, and other professionals, the school swiftly identifies any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Through this partnership work, the school gains important information about how to support these pupils. Staff make adaptations to their teaching approaches so that pupils with SEND progress well through the curriculum.

Reading sits at the heart of the school's work. The school immerses pupils in a broad range of high-quality texts. Engaging reading spaces capture pupils' imaginations and foster their love of reading. Reading ambassadors support this work by providing book recommendations for their peers. Pupils enjoy sharing books with parents at the 'morning library' sessions at the start of the school day.

Children in the Nursery class, including those in the two-year-old provision, are introduced to stories, rhymes and songs that spark their interest and develop their early language skills. This prepares them well for learning phonics as soon as they enter the Reception Year.

The books that pupils read from match the sounds that they already know. Pupils who find reading difficult, including pupils at an early stage of reading in key stage 2, receive appropriate support to help them catch up quickly.

The school's staff form a dedicated team. They are resoundingly positive about working at the school. They value the time that they are given to fulfil their roles. Working with the trust, the school ensures that staff's expertise is developed and supported. Teachers have a strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They use their expertise to design appropriate activities and provide clear explanations for pupils.

In most subjects, the school reliably checks what pupils know and remember. Teachers use questioning effectively in order to check pupils' understanding. However, in a small number of subjects, these checks do not focus on the most important knowledge that pupils need to support their future learning. This leads to gaps in some pupils' learning and prevents them from achieving as well as they could. This is not the case in the early years. Here, children are remarkably well supported to gain a secure understanding of the vocabulary, skills and knowledge that will be most useful for their learning as they move through school.

Children in the early years focus fully on the task at hand. They are highly motivated to learn. They develop their confidence and independence and play happily with their friends. Pupils in other year groups commit themselves to their learning. They demonstrate admirable resilience if they find tasks difficult. Pupils who sometimes struggle to regulate their own behaviour benefit from sensitive support from staff. They are helped to manage their emotions.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance. A small number of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. The school has a clear understanding of the reasons for this. It works closely with parents to support these pupils to attend school more regularly.

Pupils' personal development is central to the life of the school. Pupils are exceptionally well supported to look after their own mental health and well-being. The school provides a vast range of experiences to develop pupils socially and culturally. Pupils celebrate cultures, communities and ways of living which are different from their own. They discuss topical issues knowledgeably and with empathy. They develop a mature understanding of the importance of equality. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in a diverse and modern Britain.

The trust works effectively with the local governing body to hold the school to account for the quality of education that pupils receive. Trust leaders share the school's high aspirations for pupils. They know the school well and they have the expertise to support and challenge decisions in equal measure.

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 checks that the school makes on pupils' understanding are not clearly focused on the key knowledge that pupils need to know to support their future learning. This leads to gaps in some pupils' understanding and prevents them from learning all that they could. The school should ensure that teachers' checks on learning focus on the essential information that pupils need to know.

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 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	140877
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10321441
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	472
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Rubin
CEO of the trust	John Stephens CBE
Principal	Clare Larkin
Website	www.limetree.trafford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Lime Tree Primary Academy converted to become an academy in May 2014. When its predecessor school, Lime Tree Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of Bright Futures Educational Trust.
- The school provides education for two-year-old children.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools

receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, computing and history. For each deep dive, they had discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with subject leaders and with pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the board of trustees, including the CEO of the trust. She also met with members of the local governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and pupils' personal development.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents relating to pupils' welfare and education. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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