

Inspection of Calder Lodge School

Oakenclough, Preston, Lancashire PR3 1UL

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are exceptionally proud to be members of Calder Lodge School. They develop strong and trusting bonds with each other and staff. Pupils understand that they should treat each other respectfully. They manage their emotions especially well and behave responsibly. Pupils' have regard for others. This helps to ensure that the school is calm and purposeful.

Many pupils have not had positive learning experiences in their previous school. Some pupils have had long periods out of education prior to joining this school. However, the school is determined that pupils will succeed. Most pupils live up to staff's high aspirations. These pupils excel in their learning.

Pupils support many different worthy causes. For example, they enjoy coming to school dressed in their own clothes to raise funds for different cancer and children's charities. Also, pupils like to engage with residents in a local residential home through shared art and craft activities.

Pupils have an especially strong appreciation of fundamental British values, including those of democracy and the rule of law. They learn about and celebrate various cultural and religious events, including Shavuot, Eid and Diwali.

Pupils are happy at school. They enjoy the many rich and exciting opportunities available to them. Visits to castles, farms, museums and galleries enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils are encouraged to develop hobbies and skills through swimming, archery, horticulture and outdoor adventurous activities.

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

The school has developed a curriculum that is ambitious in its scope and ambition. In each subject, the school has identified the knowledge and skills that it wants pupils to learn. In most areas of the curriculum, the school has thought carefully about the order in which subject knowledge is taught. This helps pupils to build on what they know, and to apply their knowledge successfully to new learning.

The school has ensured that staff, including teachers and key workers, have the training and support needed to deliver the curriculum well. In most areas of the curriculum, staff are adept at checking on how well pupils are learning. They know that many pupils have difficulty processing and retaining information. To address this, staff provide opportunities for pupils to regularly revisit learning from previous topics and units of work. That said, in some subjects, staff do not use the school's assessment strategies consistently well. In these subjects, some gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge occasionally go unchecked. This prevents pupils from deepening their understanding and learning from their mistakes.

The school has strengthened its reading curriculum. Many opportunities are available for pupils to read throughout the school day and in a range of different subjects.

Pupils enjoy using electronic equipment, such as laptops and tablets, to match spoken words with written text. They are skilled at reviewing books. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. They often share their favourite texts with their peers.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read access a phonics programme. Typically, these pupils enjoy learning new sounds and words. However, the school's approach to teaching phonics is in its early stages of implementation. Moreover, some staff have not had the training that they need to deliver this phonics programme consistently well. Because of this, some pupils are not developing their reading fluency as quickly as they should.

The school has an in-depth understanding of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff assess pupils' language, communication, reading and mathematics knowledge and skills when they start at the school. Staff use the information from these assessments, combined with the targets in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans, to tailor lesson activities. The school works with different external specialists, such as speech, language and communication therapists, and parents and carers, to make sure that pupils with SEND get the expert help that they need. This helps pupils to successfully access different areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Their attendance improves rapidly shortly after they start at the school. Pupils behave especially well during lunchtimes, when they enjoy socialising with their friends and playing games. Pupils develop effective strategies to manage their own behaviour. All staff implement the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently.

Many opportunities are available for pupils to develop their talents and pursue their interests. For instance, pupils like to plant, and tend to, the tomatoes and potatoes that grow in the school's vegetable garden. The school council is consulted regularly. Recently members of the council worked with the school to produce a new behaviour policy. Pupils have an in-depth understanding of the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating. They learn about safe and appropriate personal relationships. Pupils care deeply about the local community. They regularly participate in beach- and river-cleaning activities. Pupils master different techniques, including yoga, to help them look after their mental health.

The proprietor uses its knowledge and experience well to ensure that leaders have the resources and training that they need to manage the school effectively. Staff appreciate that leaders, and the proprietor, are mindful of staff's workload and well-being when making decisions. They appreciate the time that they have to develop the curriculum and design teaching activities.

The proprietor ensures that all the independent school standards ('the standards') are met, including its statutory obligations under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It maintains the school's accommodation and premises to a high standard.

Parents are regularly involved in the life of the school. They value the information that they receive about their children's academic achievements and social development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a few subjects, staff do not revisit and reinforce pupils' previous learning to make sure that it has been remembered and understood. This hinders the progress that some pupils make through the curriculum. The school should ensure that staff routinely check that pupils have learned and remembered key knowledge and correct any misconceptions so that pupils build their learning securely over time.
- The school's phonics programme is not delivered consistently well by staff. As a result of this, some pupils are not developing their phonics knowledge and early reading skills as quickly as they should. The school should ensure that staff receive the training and support that they need to deliver the new phonics programme effectively.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	147548
DfE registration number	888/6121
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10322515
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Calder Lodge Ltd
Chair	Gary Holliday
Headteacher	Kelly Farnworth
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,000
Telephone number	01995676565
Website	www.calderlodge.school
Email address	info@calderlodge.school
Date of previous inspection	8 to 10 June 2021

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to their roles since the previous inspection.
- The school's previous standard inspection was 8 to 10 June 2021.
- Most places at the school are commissioned by local authorities in the North West region.
- The school operates from premises at Oakenclough, Preston, Lancashire PR3 1UL.
- This is a special school that caters for up to 48 pupils between the ages of 5 and 11 years. Pupils' SEND include, social, emotional and mental health needs, including autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and complex learning needs. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The lead inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and other leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- The lead inspector met with members of the proprietor body, including the chair.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with representatives from local authorities responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with parents. He reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics and personal, social, health and citizenship education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector discussed reading with pupils. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school with the headteacher and a member of the proprietor body.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gil Bourgade

Ofsted Inspector

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