

Inspection of Liden Academy

Liden Academy, Liden Drive, Liden, Liden Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 6EX

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Jeff Mason. This school is part of the Excalibur 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, Nicky Edmondson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Toby Watson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Liden Academy are welcoming and friendly. The ethos of the school is based around core values, such as 'determination' and 'perseverance'. Staff have high expectations of all. Pupils understand these and know why it is important to do their best.

The school environment is calm and settled. Pupils are safe and bullying is rare. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils have confidence in the way that staff manage behaviour. They use the 'worry box' in school to communicate any private concerns and receive support they need. Pupils attend well and thrive, both academically and personally.

Pupils are confident and welcoming of visitors. They are keen to share what they like best about the school. At social times, pupils mix happily with one another.

Pupils are supported to become active citizens in their school and in the community. They develop responsibilities through roles such as play buddies, peer mentors or being part of the eco-council. They deepen their knowledge of the curriculum through carefully chosen trips, such as those to a museum and local farm park. This also develops their understanding beyond their own locality.

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

The school and trust have reviewed and developed the curriculum. In most subjects, they have set out clearly the key content that pupils need to learn and revisit, including in the early years. For example, in mathematics, pupils use their understanding of important facts to solve problems and demonstrate confident mathematical reasoning.

However, in a few subjects, the way in which the curriculum is planned does not support pupils to learn the skills and knowledge they need. Pupils, therefore, do not build on previous learning successfully. In a few subjects, the school has not checked what pupils know and remember effectively. As a result, gaps in pupils' understanding are not identified.

Reading is prioritised. Children learn to read as soon as they start school. Books are well matched to the letters and sounds that pupils know. Those who need extra help with their reading get appropriate support. Children quickly develop the knowledge to become confident, fluent readers. Beyond phonics, pupils read a variety of fiction and non-fiction books. They develop a love of reading and talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors.

Children in the early years foundation stage make a strong start. There is a focus on developing children's language and communication skills. For example, children listen to stories, join in with rhymes and sing. Staff are knowledgeable about the teaching of early mathematics. Children benefit from regular opportunities to

practise counting skills and develop a secure understanding of number. The environment is engaging and inviting. Staff choose resources deliberately to promote children's learning. They support children to strengthen their physical development. For example, children use equipment to develop arm, hand and pencil control to prepare them for writing.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn well. Staff adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs effectively. The school works in partnership with parents and external agencies. They ensure that support for pupils with SEND is of a high standard.

Pupils' personal, social, health and social education is planned effectively. This begins in the early years and continues at an age-appropriate level as pupils get older. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and mentally. They know the importance of brushing their teeth and eating a balanced diet, for instance. The school has a strong strategy to educate pupils about their mental well-being. For example, pupils appreciate opportunities to reflect and listen to music. When necessary, the school works with external agencies to support pupils.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. However, these are not well attended. The school recognises the need to increase pupils' participation in what is on offer.

The school seeks to engage parents and their community to support pupils' education. Parents are positive about what the school offers, although they would appreciate more regular communication.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- In some subjects, the way in which the curriculum is planned does not support pupils to draw upon their previous learning. Therefore, pupils do not develop their skills and knowledge securely. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum is designed in a way that supports pupils to build their subject knowledge over time.
- The use of assessment is not fully developed in some subjects. As a result, gaps in pupils' understanding of the curriculum are not identified. The school needs to ensure that assessment is used to check carefully what pupils have learned, so that it can inform subsequent teaching.

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	148321
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10298097
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	350
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Toby Watson
CEO	Nicky Edmondson
Principal	Jeff Mason
Website	www.liden-pri.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Excalibur Academies Trust in 2021.
- The school does not use an alternative provider.
- The school includes provision for two- and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and took that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography and physical education. The inspectors held discussions with teachers, pupils and subject leaders. They visited a sample of lessons and reviewed pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jen Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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