

Inspection of Phoenix Academy

85 Bounces Road, Edmonton, London N9 8LD

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this small and unique school. They are polite and welcoming to each other and visitors. Pupils are proud of their school and happily talk about their learning. They are safe and well cared for. This is because adults invest time in building purposeful relationships. Pupils said they would speak to a teacher if they were worried about anything.

Behaviour is generally good. Pupils engage well with their learning and work collaboratively with each other. Leaders make expectations and routines clear. Pupils move sensibly around the school building and outside space. They enjoy socialising with their peers and have plans to improve their breakout areas. Pupils know what bullying is. They said it happens rarely but are in no doubt that adults would help resolve bullying if it did occur.

Leaders are determined for every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well. Pupils leave the school well equipped for what comes next. This is because leaders and staff provide the right support and encouragement.

Leaders enhance pupils' learning through trips such as hiking expeditions and visits to museums. They also make sure pupils learn about key life skills such as how money works.

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

Leaders have high aspirations for all. Pupils are taught in two classes: the juniors (five to 11 years) and the seniors (11 to 18 years). In September 2021, leaders introduced thematic unit studies across a six-year plan. These studies include elements from different subject areas and blend with the packets of accelerated Christian education (PACE) already in place. Together, they intend these to provide pupils with a rich and broad curriculum. Leaders complement the PACE and thematic units further with termly science weeks. During the inspection, pupils in the juniors were debating the impact on the ecosystem of hunting sharks. Senior pupils were carrying out practical investigations into oil spill clean-up operations. Due to the limitations of space on site, leaders arrange to use the local leisure centre for standalone physical education (PE) lessons.

Because of the small numbers of pupils on roll, leaders have planned a six-year curriculum to avoid teaching the same lessons each year. Teachers then adapt sessions in the thematic studies for the individual pupils in their class. However, this does require teachers to meet the needs of pupils that are up to five years older or younger than their class peers. Not all teachers are confident in their own subject knowledge across the thematic studies. Leaders have begun to address this, but further training is needed for all staff in the wider curriculum subjects.

Leaders are in the early stages of introducing discrete lessons in drama, art and design and English language to senior pupils. They have not yet fully planned when and how the smaller chunks of knowledge in these subjects will be taught across the six-year cycle. Leaders know they need to make sure it builds on and complements what is taught in both the PACE and thematic curriculums. Leaders regularly check what pupils remember in the PACE curriculum. In the thematic studies, assessment is less clear. Some teachers are checking what pupils know at the beginning of lessons, but this is not consistent.

Pupils learn to read from the very start of the junior class. Teachers introduce the sounds in the order needed to efficiently access the PACE curriculum. It is a unique approach with various symbols used to indicate the sound a letter is making. Pupils quickly achieve fluency and learn all the sounds letters make in six months. They read independently every day in the PACE curriculum. Pupils visit the community library every week and select books to read for pleasure.

Pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. This is because teachers know their pupils well and provide appropriate support where needed. For example, in the PACE curriculum, teachers make sure a pupil's working memory is not overloaded by breaking down the learning into smaller chunks. Leaders provide individual workstations for each pupil. These support engagement in independent learning and prevent distractions. Leaders seek out the most appropriate experiences for pupils to succeed. They make sure pupils have the academic and social foundations to successfully transition to the next stage of their education or career.

Most pupils are motivated to learn and display positive attitudes towards school. Leaders and staff support positive behaviour through mediation and mentoring. Pupils are taught to be responsible and respectful citizens. They learn about ambition and entrepreneurship. For instance, pupils designed, costed and manufactured their own PE uniform.

Leaders provide pupils with unbiased and informative careers education. Pupils attended an online careers fair earlier in the year. They also learn practical skills such as applying for college courses online.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Leaders teach pupils how to stay physically and mentally fit through personal, social and health education. Pupils learn about fundamental British values, such as democracy. They have recently elected a school council and projects are already in the pipeline to improve school facilities.

Governors and trustees are fully behind the school's vision to provide pupils with an individualised and holistic education. They hold leaders to account effectively and meet their statutory obligations. Staff are proud to work at the school. They said leaders care about their well-being.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure staff attend regular training on all aspects of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant. They keep a close eye on pupils and report any signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders liaise with local safeguarding partners to secure the right help for pupils when needed.

Pupils are aware of the risks they face. They spoke knowledgeably about dangers such as cyberbullying and what they should do if it happened.

Leaders and governors make thorough checks when recruiting staff. They make sure that only those staff safe to work with pupils are employed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have planned a six-year rolling curriculum to provide breadth beyond the PACE curriculum. However, some subject plans do not contain sufficient detail on content or how learning builds year on year. This means teachers are unclear about what to teach and when. Leaders should ensure all subjects are coherently planned and sequenced. This will provide clarity to teachers on how learning builds and help pupils know and remember more of the wider curriculum. It is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff on how to deliver it. For these reasons, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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 provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134580
DfE registration number	308/6068
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10242758
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Proprietor	N.L.M. Trust
Chair	Gareth Hawkes
Headteacher	Paul Kelly
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,940
Telephone number	02088876888
Website	www.phoenixacademy.co.uk
Email address	paul@phoenixacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 December 2019

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian ethos. Pupils follow the Accelerated Christian Education curriculum blended with thematic unit studies. Senior pupils study English language, art and drama as standalone lessons.
- The last standard inspection took place on 10 to 12 December 2019.
- The school does not use 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.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and curriculum development leader. They also held discussions with governors and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, physical education, and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also looked at curriculum planning for art, and personal, social and health education.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, looked at records and scrutinised the school's safeguarding practice.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day and spoke to staff about pupils' personal development. They also held discussions with pupils about their views of the quality of education the school provides.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff through Ofsted surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Alison Colenso, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Phil Garnham

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022