

Inspection of Phoenix Academy

85 Bounces Road, Edmonton, London N9 8LD

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 March 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are determined to succeed and enjoy their studies at this small community-minded school. Pupils joining the school quickly form strong, positive relationships with the adults that work with them. There is a keen sense of kinship between pupils of all ages in the school. Pupils behave well. They are happy and safe.

The school offers a broad curriculum. Pupils complete individual study by working through booklets of learning with the support of their teachers. This is combined with thematic units of study which gives pupils the opportunity to experience a group learning environment. Secondary-aged pupils also study lessons in drama, art and English literature as they work towards qualifications in the International Certificate of Christian Education (ICCE).

However, the curriculum offer lacks overall ambition, particularly for pupils of secondary age. At times, curriculum content repeats itself and pupils study work that does not successfully build on their prior learning. The school's chosen phonics programme does not securely support pupils to confidently decode and blend as they learn to read.

Pupils are encouraged to celebrate their diverse school community. They learn about a range of different cultures and religions. Older pupils receive careers advice and guidance when preparing to leave the school. They take part in work experience and attend careers workshops as part of their educational trips.

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

The school places emphasis on developing pupils' character and skills for life. The thematic units that pupils of all ages study cover a broad range of themes. Pupils learn to be self-motivated and work individually through their independent learning booklets. The thematic units give them the opportunity to develop their skills in discussion and group work.

However, the school has not coherently sequenced what pupils should be learning across their different areas of study. This means that some pupils unnecessarily repeat what they have already learned rather than building on what has gone before. At times, pupils in key stages 3 and 4 complete work that is suitable for pupils much younger than themselves instead of learning more sophisticated concepts.

The individualised approach to the curriculum offers some benefits to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils make their way through the booklets provided with support from staff. At times, staff that work with pupils with SEND do not clearly understand their needs and the best ways to help them.

Pupils in the school read widely and often from a range of authors and genres. The school encourages pupils to develop a love of reading through recommended book

lists and regular visits to the local library. Pupils routinely complete book reviews which they present to other pupils. Weekly mathematics challenges and termly science weeks also encourage pupils to find the joy in their learning.

Some pupils who join the school need help to develop their reading fluency and confidence. When delivering its chosen phonics programme, the school is not teaching all the sounds that pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils are not securing the skills they need to decode and blend unfamiliar words. The booklets that pupils use when completing their independent learning match the sounds they have learned. This ensures pupils can access their curriculum materials. However, the reading books used to support pupils to improve their reading contain words that pupils are not able to decode.

Staff quickly get to know new pupils when they join the school. They use diagnostic tests to decide which booklets pupils should start their independent studies within. Pupils self-assess their learning through short quizzes and end-of-topic tests. They use these to identify areas which they may need to review again. Staff monitor the learning of each pupil. Currently, the school does not use this information as a tool to identify pupils with SEND as well as it could do.

Pupils are polite and pleasant to each other and the adults who work with them. They are focused and hard working when completing independent studies. Pupils' behaviour is less orderly at break times and when transitioning between lessons. Pupils attend well at the school. Some pupils who join the school have had breaks in their education due to poor attendance. The school quickly establishes positive relationships with these pupils and their families so that they attend regularly.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of educational visits linked to their areas of study. For example, all pupils visit the Thames barrier to bring their learning about sustainable energy to life. The school has developed a clearly sequenced curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). They cover age-appropriate topics including mental health, online safety, sexual harassment and consent.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate the efforts of school leaders to reduce their workload and support their well-being. Parents and carers report that communication is a strength of the school. They are very positive about the range of enrichment opportunities the school provides to its pupils.

Some areas of the school's recent development have had less impact than school leaders had intended. Some staff with specific responsibilities lack some of the knowledge and skills that would enable them to carry out their roles more effectively. This reduces how well leaders can sustain improvements to the school.

The proprietor and governing body do not have strategic oversight of key aspects of the school's work, including the school's management of safeguarding. There are limited mechanisms to hold school leaders accountable for their actions or to check the impact of the actions they have taken. The governing body does not include external members with appropriate skills and experience. However, the proprietor

and school leaders have demonstrated the capacity to make and sustain some improvements over time.

The proprietor has not ensured that all the independent school standards (the standards) are met.

The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school has not ensured the phonics programme they are using covers the full range of sounds that pupils at the early stages of learning to read need to learn when developing their decoding and blending skills. Pupils do not read books that are fully decodable or that match the sounds they have learned. As a result, pupils struggle to decode and blend unfamiliar words. The school should ensure that pupils at the early stages of learning to read follow a phonics programme that gives them the skills they need to decode and blend securely so that all pupils gain reading fluency and confidence quickly.
- Some parts of the school's curriculum lack ambition. At times, pupils at different stages of their education study the same curriculum content. As a result, pupils often study some aspects of the curriculum in multiple places. A few pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are not accessing resources that are appropriate for their age and stage. As a result, the work pupils produce is not of a high quality. The school should ensure that the curriculum is tailored to the ages and aptitudes of individual pupils, including pupils with SEND, so that they achieve their best.
- The school does not have systems in place to check on the effectiveness of school leaders' work. As a result, school leaders do not receive proper challenge for their actions. This includes robust monitoring of safeguarding procedures in the school. The school and the proprietor should ensure that procedures exist to check on the quality of the school's work and hold school leaders to account for their actions.

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	134580
DfE registration number	308/6068
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10375106
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	22
Proprietor	N.L.M Trust
Chair	Aaron Chambers
Headteacher	Paul Kelly
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,940
Telephone number	0208 8876 888
Website	www.phoenixacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@phoenixacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 June 2022

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 literature, art and drama as standalone lessons.
- The school operates from one site, located at 85 Bounces Road, Edmonton, London, N9 8LD. The school is registered to admit 45 pupils from ages five to 18 years. At the time of the inspection there were 22 pupils on the school roll whose ages were seven to 16 years.
- The school does not currently use any 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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 met with the headteacher and other senior school leaders. They met with the chair of governors and one trustee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English including early reading, science, history and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 reviewed the records relating to maintenance of the school premises. They considered the school's records of behaviour, attendance, admissions and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses of parents to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including freetext comments. They also reviewed the responses to the online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Annabel Davies, lead inspector

Maureen Okoye

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan;
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently;

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