

Inspection of Linton School

Kirkham Road, Freckleton PR4 1HX

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education	Outstanding
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Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Outstanding
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this welcoming and happy school. They benefit from the exceptionally warm and friendly relationships that they enjoy with staff. Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have experienced considerable disruption to their education prior to joining the school. New pupils settle very quickly because of the bespoke programmes put in place to support their transition to the school.

The school has an unwavering determination that pupils will achieve their very best. There is a shared commitment to 'Building our futures, together'. This ambition is fully realised. The highly tailored curriculum that is in place for each pupil ensures that they achieve remarkably well.

Pupils learn in a respectful and calm environment. They easily live up to the high expectations that the school has of their behaviour. Pupils are keen to earn points for behaving well and to achieve their weekly targets.

Pupils are fully involved in many aspects of school life. They spoke enthusiastically about how they care for the horses, goats, rabbits and ducks within the school grounds. Pupils take great pride in growing a range of fruit and vegetables. They learn to cook healthy meals with these ingredients to share with their peers and staff.

Pupils readily assume roles of responsibility. Members of the school council gather other pupils' views to inform decisions made about the school, for example about the design of the new school badge. Eco warriors use their learning about plastic waste and the environment to champion recycling within the school.

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

The school has designed a rich and aspirational curriculum for its pupils. This is carefully broken down into small, logical steps. Careful consideration is given to supporting pupils to build a secure understanding of the subjects that they study.

Many pupils who attend the school have been out of education for long periods of time. The school carries out careful checks when pupils arrive. It accurately identifies any additional needs that they may have. Staff are highly skilled in ensuring that the curriculum is carefully tailored to each pupil. Individualised curriculum pathways ensure that pupils' SEND are met. Information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans is used skilfully to design activities that help pupils to build their knowledge and skills over time.

Staff are expert at helping pupils to address any gaps or misconceptions that they may have in their learning. Pupils are provided with plenty of meaningful opportunities to revisit and secure earlier learning. From their varied starting points,

pupils achieve very well. They are extremely well prepared to move on to further education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Reading takes a very high priority across the curriculum. There is a relentless drive to encourage pupils to read for pleasure. For example, the school's welcoming library provides a range of interesting texts for pupils to read. Pupils are motivated to earn rewards for reading regularly. They read a diverse range of books, including classic novels and plays by Shakespeare. Pupils are well supported to develop their appreciation of the work of different authors.

The school ensures that the strategies used to develop pupils' reading are precisely matched to their specific needs. This includes providing effective support for any pupils with gaps in their phonics knowledge so that they can catch up swiftly with their peers.

Staff are extremely well trained and supported by the school to manage pupils' behaviour effectively. For instance, staff work closely with external professionals to ensure that pupils receive effective therapeutic support when required. Staff also support pupils to gain the knowledge that they need to manage their own emotions successfully. For example, pupils make full use of the school's grounds when they need some time and space to be calm. In addition, staff ensure that pupils develop the important skills required to be successful learners, for example to persevere when work is tricky.

Many pupils have had low rates of attendance in their previous schooling. The school's close work with external agencies, together with the provision of an engaging and exciting curriculum, has helped pupils to improve their attendance over time.

Pupils flourish personally as well as academically. The school provides extensive opportunities for pupils to develop as confident individuals. For example, pupils make rapid gains in their self-esteem by taking part in exciting outdoor activities such as horse riding, archery and kayaking. They are also supported to participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils learn first aid and how to manage their finances so that they are well prepared for independent living.

The school is committed to transforming the life chances of each pupil. It makes full use of the local community to provide pupils with valuable experiences. For example, pupils have created survival kits to distribute to local homeless people and visited a local care home to play games with its residents.

Pupils receive exceptionally high-quality careers advice and support which prepares them very well for their next steps in education and the world of work. This is bespoke to each pupil. This allows pupils to move on to aspirational destinations and enables them to realise their ambitions when they leave the school.

The proprietor is committed to providing the very best educational experience for pupils. It keeps a careful check on the work of the school by ensuring that it has

robust systems in place to provide effective support and challenge in equal measure. The proprietor has a detailed understanding of the independent school standards ('the standards'). It ensures that the standards are met consistently and that it fulfils its statutory duties. This includes ensuring that the school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor ensures that the school is a safe place where staff and pupils are treated equally and with respect.

Parents and carers described the transformational impact that the school has on their children. They praised the progress that their children make and the high level of care that the school affords them.

Staff are exceedingly proud to work at the school. They were overwhelmingly positive about the support and care that they receive in their roles. This includes the many training opportunities provided for them. Staff said that the school is very considerate of their workload and well-being when making decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	145242
DfE registration number	888/6075
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10322508
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	CareTech Community Services Limited
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Headteacher	Rebekah Dennett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,800 to £115,450
Telephone number	01772 957062
Website	www.lintonschool.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	rebekah.dennett@rocnorthwest.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 June to 1 July 2021

Information about this school

- The school is based at Kirkham Road, Freckleton PR4 1HX.
- Since the previous inspection, a new proprietor has been approved by the Department for Education (DfE). The chair and one other member of the proprietor body have changed since the previous inspection. The new proprietor is: CareTech Community Services Limited. As part of this inspection, the DfE updated 'Get Information about Schools' to reflect this change.
- All pupils attending the school have social, emotional and mental health needs and have EHC plans.
- Many pupils join the school with significant gaps in their learning. Some pupils have not attended an educational setting for a long period of time prior to joining this school.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The school's previous standard inspection was 29 June to 1 July 2021.

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 that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the regional lead and the director of education for Caretech Community Services Limited. She also met with a member of the proprietor body.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with representatives of three local authorities responsible for placing pupils at the school.
- Inspectors completed a tour of the premises, accompanied by a school leader, to check the school's compliance with the standards.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, art and design, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- The lead inspector held meetings with other leaders, including those responsible for SEND, pupils' behaviour and attendance, and personal development.
- 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 spoke to pupils about their experience of the school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at lunch times.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. This included documentation and information relating to the standards and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to parents by telephone.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cleo Cunningham

Ofsted Inspector

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