

# London Colney Primary & Nursery School

Alexander Road, London Colney, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 1JG

## Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. She, and her senior leadership team, have brought about significant improvements in pupil achievement and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors are knowledgeable and well informed about the quality of education provided. School leaders are provided with an appropriate balance of support and challenge.
- Leaders, teachers and support staff have benefited from high-quality training and support. This has had a very positive impact on the quality of their work.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in reading, writing and mathematics is good.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are conscientious and work successfully to engage all their pupils, whatever their needs, and help them to become successful learners.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They treat others with respect, demonstrate self-confidence and welcome visitors to the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and that there are effective safeguarding procedures at the school.
- Pupils' attendance continues to rise but the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below the national average.
- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection, particularly in phonics in key stage 1 and in reading and mathematics in key stage 2. Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as their progress in reading and mathematics.
- Children's achievement in the early years has improved steadily since the previous inspection and was above the national average in 2017.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral and social development is well provided for. Pupils have a good understanding of the different major faiths in Britain.
- Leaders have made appropriate amendments to the wider curriculum. The delivery of this curriculum is variable across some of the subject areas.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that more is outstanding.
- Ensure that attendance continues to improve, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Continue to improve outcomes in all subjects, and particularly in writing, by:
  - developing further opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum
  - ensuring that leaders track pupils' progress in subjects within the broader curriculum with the same precision that is evident in English, mathematics and science.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, ably assisted all leaders and governors, has been successful and unwavering in her determination to improve the school. All staff understand and willingly share her high expectations and ambitious vision for the school. As a result, all aspects of the school's work are good and improving. Leaders have a strong capacity to deliver further improvements.
- All staff are keen to learn and develop. Their morale is high. The staff survey revealed that they wholeheartedly feel well led and managed. This collective sense of direction has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for further development. The headteacher has ensured that improvement planning is rigorous, and is supported with appropriate expertise from outside agencies, including the local authority.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly. They make skilful use of the information from this monitoring to provide staff with carefully selected training. Staff speak very positively about the range and quality of training that they receive. They say that this has helped them to improve outcomes for their pupils.
- The headteacher manages teachers' performance well and targets are closely matched to the needs of the individual as well as the school. As a consequence, the headteacher has challenged weak teaching practices.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been reorganised effectively. Pupils' needs are identified early and accurately. Great care is taken to support their needs and address gaps in their learning. This is financed appropriately by the additional grant. Case studies demonstrate evidence of good progress. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved.
- School leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used well. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving. In 2017, there was a substantial improvement in phonics in Year 1 for this group. Progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, for pupils in receipt of pupil premium, was also good. Inspection evidence indicates that disadvantaged pupils, currently in the school, are making good progress.
- Leaders make effective use of the physical education and sports premium. Sports coaches have enhanced the provision in school and increased the number of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' enthusiasm for physical education has risen significantly and they appreciate the range of sporting activities on offer.
- Leaders have reviewed and made appropriate arrangements for the wider curriculum, for example in RE. The newly implemented curriculum is being monitored to evaluate how well pupils are achieving across all subject areas.
- Pupils benefit from a range of enrichment activities. For example, all pupils were involved in an art week last term and produced work of high quality, which was displayed in the school and the local community. During a culture afternoon, families

were encouraged to dress and present food typical of the broad range of cultures represented at the school. They created a handprint flag that represented their countries of origin.

- Pupils visited KidZania, where they were provided with opportunities to enact roles such as firefighters, policemen, football players and airline pilots. As a consequence, pupils have a raised awareness of the choices that they face in their future lives.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good. The school has strong links with local religious groups. Pupils raise money for charities such as the NSPCC. There is an active pupil parliament and a weekly review of world news during assemblies. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and have a good knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values.
- Leaders and governors have worked successfully to improve the engagement of parents in the life of the school and their children's learning. Leaders have established well-attended weekly workshops for parents, covering topics such as e-safety, 'Prevent' and phonics. Parents are very positive about the school and describe it as 'very happy and friendly; like a family'.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective. Governors are knowledgeable, with a clear understanding of educational issues. Their skills and experience are used well to support school improvement.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are determined to improve the school and have a precise grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. While they are very supportive of the headteacher, they are equally prepared to hold leaders to account, where they judge that practice needs to improve.
- Members of the governing body regularly visit the school to meet with leaders and observe all aspects of the work of the school. For example, they observe learning and the behaviour of pupils. Governors regularly scrutinise pupils' progress information and invite leaders to report on their responsibilities during governors' meetings. The governing body carefully reviews the spending of the school budgets, including the pupil premium and PE grants.
- Governors regularly attend training and updates from staff at the school. They have received substantial training, for example on safeguarding, understanding performance data and assessment.
- The governing body rigorously monitor the arrangements for the performance management of the staff, including the headteacher.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record meets all statutory requirements. This is reviewed regularly by the governor with responsibility for safeguarding.
- The designated safeguarding lead knows the pupils well. Staff alert her to changes in

any pupil's behaviour and report any concerns quickly. She works closely with parents and external agencies to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Precise records are kept by the school of any concerns and the way in which they have been addressed.

- Staff have been trained in line with government safeguarding guidance and they are regularly updated. This includes training on the government's 'Prevent' duty to support pupils who are vulnerable to extremism or radicalisation.
- Pupils say that they receive regular and useful information about how to keep themselves safe from 'stranger danger', on the internet and other social media.
- All parents who responded to Parent View, and the considerably larger number who expressed their views in the school's own surveys, agree that their children are safe at school.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The headteacher has placed teaching, learning and assessment at the centre of the school's work. As a result of effective support and training, teachers have high expectations and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. In addition, they have an understanding of how to capture their pupils' interest and what makes them want to learn. For example, in a Year 4 class, pupils used role play to enhance their understanding of habitats in the rainforest.
- Teachers promote positive attitudes to learning. They also emphasise the importance of perseverance. In a Year 6 class, pupils worked with enthusiasm to improve their figurative writing. They were not worried about taking risks and learned quickly from their mistakes. Their intellectual curiosity was very evident.
- Teachers use questioning well to monitor their pupils' understanding and to help them to tackle misconceptions quickly. Questioning is also used effectively to help pupils to think more deeply and widen their considerations. In a Year 3 class, for example, the teacher used questions to challenge pupils to demonstrate how mnemonics could help them to improve their spellings. This resulted in animated discussion as pupils successfully deepened their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers provide pupils with an increasing number of opportunities to embed their writing skills in English and the wider curriculum. Pupils are proud of their work and take care with their presentation.
- Work in pupils' books demonstrate that by the end of Year 1, most pupils use basic punctuation routinely well. Their handwriting has improved considerably and they can use adjectives and conjunctions. By the beginning of Year 6, most pupils are using advanced vocabulary to very good effect and apply this in different types of writing. For example, in non-chronological reports, pupils used technical vocabulary appropriately and well.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Pupils enjoy reading and evidence in their reading logs shows that most read widely at home.
- The teaching of mathematics is also effective. Teachers regularly set complex and challenging problems to ensure that pupils develop their reasoning skills. For example,

pupils worked successfully in pairs, in a Year 5 class, to generate problems to solve in relation to positive and negative numbers.

- Teaching assistants make use of the skills that they have developed during the high-quality training that leaders provide. Assistants typically provide good support and challenge for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who find the learning more difficult.
- Pupils understand how well they are learning and what they have to do to improve. This is because teachers and pupils share an accurate understanding of the new assessment procedures. Teachers review their pupils' work daily and provide verbal feedback in line with the school policy. Pupils make good use of this feedback and also assess how far they have met the learning objectives at the end of each session.
- Pupils are provided with well targeted support if they need to catch up. In Year 6, pupils are invited to a weekly Saturday school and an Easter School to build their confidence and prepare them for their tests.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has developed a positive learning environment and pupils respond well to this. One pupil commented; 'I come to school every day, not because I need to, but because I want to.' His peers agreed with this view.
- Most pupils develop self-confidence as they progress through the school as a result of the care they receive. Older pupils are articulate and keen to talk positively about their experiences in the school and the responsibilities they have undertaken.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to become playground pals, peer tutors or to be elected to the school parliament. Members of the school parliament are ambassadors for school initiatives such as the new approach to assessment called 'conferencing'. They also speak in assemblies and liaise with senior managers, thereby developing their decision-making and leadership skills.
- The school promotes six values: honesty, respect, success, responsibility, care and perseverance. Pupils are familiar with, and can talk about, these values. For example, they are encouraged to persevere and develop into resilient learners who are keen to improve their work. As one pupil said: 'I keep trying and trying to get things right.'
- Most pupils enjoy learning. They collaborate well during lessons. For example, pupils were keen to discuss ways that they could improve their writing in an English lesson.
- Pupils say that racism and other forms of bullying are rare. They are confident that issues concerning bullying will be resolved quickly by adults in the school.
- The school promotes pupils' physical health. There are opportunities to join sports-related clubs, for example, football, gymnastics and multi-sports. Pupils can also join a cookery or a gardening club. Pupils are encouraged to play games or engage in sporting activities on the school field during the lunch break.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have responded well to the headteacher's high expectations for behaviour. The number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced considerably. In many classes, pupils listen attentively. Incidents of low-level disruption or disengagement from the learning are rare. A house point system is used to reward good behaviour and achievement and awards are issued weekly during assemblies.
- Pupils mix easily and well during playtimes and the lunch break. They behave sensibly as they move around the school and they are polite to their teachers, visitors and peers.
- Punctuality has improved at the beginning of the day as a result of the school's preferred 'soft start' to the school day. During this time, breakfast is offered to all pupils in their classrooms and this has motivated more to arrive early at school.
- Leaders have placed great importance on pupil attendance, which has improved since the previous inspection. Class attendance figures are read each week during assemblies and a cup is awarded to the winning class.
- Pupil ambassadors have been appointed to promote attendance. Leaders have worked closely with parents and external agencies to reduce permanent absence. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below the national average and leaders have made this a priority for their work.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- As a result of leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' achievement has improved rapidly across a range of subjects and in each year group, and is now good. Evidence in school indicates that this improved achievement is sustained and accelerating.
- In Year 1, 100% of children passed the phonics screening check, building on the improvements evident in 2016. This represents a considerable improvement in attainment and is a testament to the school's increased emphasis on the importance of reading. In a recent survey of pupils' attitudes, the majority say that they now love to read.
- Achievement at the end of key stage 1 is at the national average, but the proportion of pupils working at greater depth has improved substantially, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Provisional assessment information indicates that, in 2017, Year 6 pupils made progress that was higher than the national average particularly in reading and mathematics. The number of pupils who exceeded expectations in reading and mathematics was also higher than the national average. Progress in writing in Year 6 was also higher than the national average. A scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that the improvements in achievement are being sustained.
- There are small numbers of disadvantaged pupils, and also those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in each year group. Leaders track the

progress of their disadvantageded pupils and provide timely and effective support. While many disadvantageded pupils make good progress, a minority of this group do not make expected progress and this is exacerbated by poor attendance.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly. The precise and well-chosen support that they receive enables them to make good progress from their starting points.
- The number of pupils at the school who do not speak English as a first language at home is considerably higher than the national average. Most of these pupils develop excellent communication skills in English and, historically, make better progress than their peers. The few pupils who have recently arrived in the country are supported well. Their communication skills improve rapidly.
- More-able pupils make good progress. The challenge for more-able pupils has improved since the previous inspection. These pupils are now provided with extra, or more-complex, learning activities to develop their abilities. For example, in mathematics, more-able pupils are expected to solve complex mathematical problems. In a Year 6 class, pupils responded well when they were challenged to improve their writing by using personification, metaphors and similes.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The leader in early years has worked with passion and determination to successfully raise standards of achievement and renew the learning environment. Consequently, the quality of the provision has improved considerably.
- Children's needs are carefully and accurately assessed when they enter early years. Their progress is tracked and staff precisely identify children's individual learning needs so they receive the correct support. Consequently, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development has risen and is now just above the national average. Given the children's individual starting points, this represents good progress.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly. This is due to the considerable training to develop staff in this phase. The quality of the provision is reviewed regularly, both within school and by the local authority.
- Adults in early years work very well together. Consequently, learning activities are efficiently prepared and organised. Adults check children's progress regularly and individual learning journals are used effectively to provide evidence of their achievements.
- Children are well behaved and maintain their concentration for long periods. This is due to the interesting learning activities. They are developing good communication skills, basic phonics and number work. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are well organised so that children are learning to cooperate, make decisions and develop independence.
- The environment in early years is safe and caring. The proportion of adults to children is appropriate and adults ensure that children are well supervised. Welfare requirements are met in full.
- The development of good relationships with parents has been a priority this year.

Communications are established well before the children start school when staff conduct home visits. Parents are encouraged to participate in the initial assessments that provide useful information about their child's interests and development.

- Leaders ensure that parents are kept well informed about the progress that their children are making. Workshops for parents are organised throughout the year, for example, on phonics and mathematics. Parents are invited to participate in the planning to improve the outdoor environment. Parents are very positive about their children's experiences in early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	117146
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10023358

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Theresa Clements
Headteacher/	Sarah Joyce
Telephone number	01727 823283
Website	<a href="http://www.londoncolney.herts.sch.uk">www.londoncolney.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@londoncolney.herts.sch.uk">head@londoncolney.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 February 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- London Colney is a smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and the number that speak English as a second language is well above the national average.
- A higher proportion of pupils join or leave the school during the school year than in schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.

- The headteacher has changed since the last section 5 inspection. She took up her current position in September 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited every class in the school at least once, jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning and assessed the quality of the pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff, pupils and governors. The inspector also met with the school improvement partner from Hertfordshire County Council.
- The inspector looked at documentation, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information of pupils' achievement, records of behaviour and safety and the monitoring records of the governing body.
- Pupils' written work was scrutinised. Examples were selected from the previous and the present academic year and across a range of subjects and year groups.
- The inspector held discussions with parents in the playground. Account was also taken of the 10 responses on Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents.

## Inspection team

Jane Ladner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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