

Longwood Primary Academy

Paringdon Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 7RQ

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a good and rapidly improving school.
- Since the multi-academy trust (MAT) took over the school there has been rapid improvement in pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- The quality of teaching has improved markedly and the quality of care and contribution to pupils' well-being is excellent.
- As a result of the transformational leadership of the headteacher and his deputy, supported by the leadership team of the MAT's Harlow hub, the progress of pupils over the last two years has been at least in line with other pupils nationally.
- The headteacher has the confidence of staff, pupils and parents. Parents are remarkably positive about all aspects of the school and very nearly all would recommend it. The reputation of the school has risen and, as a result, pupil numbers are increasing.
- Leaders exude a great sense of moral purpose for the pupils of this school to flourish academically and socially. They have successfully driven dramatic improvement over the last two years. This is apparent across all aspects of the school. For example, attendance has improved and is now in line with that found in other primary schools.
- The school's work to provide care and support to enable pupils to flourish is exemplary.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons and around the school is excellent.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good because leaders have found imaginative solutions to difficulties in recruitment.
- The early years foundation stage (EYFS) is well led. It provides pupils with an effective start to their education.
- Pupils' progress in writing is above average. Pupils' achievement overall is good but they do not do as well in reading and mathematics as they do in writing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that there is more consistency in pupil progress between subjects by raising progress in reading and mathematics to similar levels to that found in writing.
- Make even better use of the strong leadership provided within the MAT to further enhance teaching and learning across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and his deputy make a highly effective team. Together with other leaders, they have galvanised staff, pupils and parents to support the school's rapid improvement under his leadership. For example, a parent told inspectors that, 'The school has improved and the headteacher is fab.' Very nearly all parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that the school is well led and managed and would recommend the school. Staff are very positive about the current leadership and management of the school.
- Leaders of the MAT and the headteacher have a vision for the school, which staff share. There is a clear culture of hard work and excellent behaviour throughout the school. This has taken a lot of effort to achieve. Leaders of the MAT and of the school have an astute understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. For example, during joint observations with inspectors, leaders were accurate in their analysis of strengths and areas for development. School leaders are ambitious for further improvement. The school's leaders contribute to the development of assessment in other schools in the Harlow hub and beyond Harlow in the promotion of pupil well-being.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching in the school. One of the main reasons that parents are so positive about the school is that pupils now experience stable staffing. Leaders have worked imaginatively to achieve this. They are working effectively in partnership with a school-based teacher training provider to ensure that pupils receive consistently effective provision. This is supported by subject experts from the MAT's Harlow hub. They have used performance management robustly to hold teachers accountable for meeting national teaching standards. Teachers are helped to improve through regular professional development and opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools in the Harlow hub. There are clear expectations which teachers understand and implement.
- The curriculum is broad and well designed. The MAT's curriculum leader has a very deep understanding of the knowledge and skills needed for success in different subjects and is aware of current curriculum debates. New subject specific assessment systems in science, physical education (PE), history and geography underpin pupils' progress in these subjects. For example, when planning the assessment structures, teachers think carefully about 'what does it mean to be a scientist or a historian?' Careful consideration is given to the best way to promote the knowledge and skills in relation to both the national curriculum and the local context. Art and music have an important role in the school. Together with learning Spanish and religious education, these subjects promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development really well. This development is further enhanced by the range of trips to museums, theatres and sporting events.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities at the beginning and end of the school day, contributing to the school's 'the mind, body and soul experience'. Examples include talking skills, art exploration, netball, mental maths, basketball, debating,

Mandarin, football and chess. Leaders have been supported by staff in the decision to extend the length of the school day.

- Leaders have carefully analysed the spending and impact of additional funding through the pupil premium. Money has been used very effectively to tackle pupils' individual barriers to learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils attain results in line with and, in some cases, better than all pupils nationally.
- The PE and sports premium funding is used mainly for specialist teaching and to increase the skills of all teachers. Pupils have increased opportunities to represent their school in competitive sport and to play for the Harlow hub. Lesson plans for PE have been written from the early years to Year 6 to provide progression. Over half the pupils now participate in sports clubs. The impact of sports funding can be seen in the increasing level of participation in clubs and competitions.
- Very nearly all parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire were complimentary about the school's communication, although a couple disagreed. A typical comment to inspectors was, 'I feel this school has gone from strength to strength since turning into an academy... The teachers go above and beyond to help with any problems and, if they can't help, pass it through the management team that can deal with it.' The theme of improvement was common to many parental comments.
- The level of support given by the MAT's Harlow hub has been instrumental in enabling the school to move forward so quickly. Subject leadership is provided from the hub and teachers from across the hub come together to share expertise and plan together learning for pupils. MAT leaders are a regular and visible presence around the school. They especially support the training and coaching of new staff.

Governance of the school

- Governance is undertaken by a governing body covering the MAT's four Harlow schools:
 - the MAT's Harlow governors bring high levels of experience and expertise around education and welfare from schools and business, which enhances the school
 - governors regularly visit the school and hold leaders to account for the quality of education, pupil welfare and safeguarding
 - they know the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the school well and provide effective challenge and support through regular, well-informed, professional board meetings.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Rigorous systems are in place and their impact is checked by the MAT.
- School policies and procedures are implemented well. All staff have received appropriate training on keeping pupils safe. Staff know what to look out for and how to raise concerns.
- Pupils, staff and parents are very positive about pupils' safety and well-being. The

culture of the school is one where pupils and families are known well by staff. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and cared about.

- Pupils' well-being is central to the school. For example, it works closely in partnership with Place2Be, a leading children's mental health charity. The school was a winner of the national Child Champion Award in 2016, which is presented to a school every two years for high-quality well-being for children. The school was winner of the regional award (East of England) for 'Outstanding Contribution to Emotional Health and Wellbeing'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Lessons throughout the school are characterised by very positive working relationships. Teachers create an excellent climate for learning, with all pupils engaged in their work. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils respond favourably to the appropriate praise that is given. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and comply with requests from staff very quickly.
- The school's monitoring of the quality of teaching using a wide range of information, such as book monitoring and lesson drop-ins, indicates that teaching is consistently good across the school. This represents a dramatic improvement under the current leadership.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which adds authority to their teaching and gives pupils confidence. Typically, lessons are well planned. They are characterised by high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers help pupils to understand how to improve their work. Feedback over time provides pupils with clear next steps for improvement, which enables them to make progress. The school's assessment policy is used consistently and has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders analyse the strengths and weaknesses of teaching accurately. They have used performance management effectively to raise the quality of teaching across the school.
- Typically, the level of pupil engagement is high, because of the teachers' effective planning and delivery. Leaders and teachers have created a culture where pupils are hungry to learn new things and to do well. Teachers are ably supported by some highly effective teaching assistants.
- Teachers often make effective use of pupil discussion to develop pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, where pupils worked well in pairs to tell each other what they would put in a letter, sounding out appropriate punctuation.
- Pupils' vocabulary is being built up well through, for example, 'word of the week'. Encouraging pupils to talk to one another about their work is proving effective in pupils' strong progress in writing.
- The '3 before T' approach is effective at promoting pupils' independence by encouraging them to avoid over-reliance on the teacher to always supply the answers. Classrooms are attractive and, generally, stimulating learning environments. Although a range of resources are used well, the displays could be used more effectively as an additional resource to support pupils' learning.

- Leaders have rightly identified that pupils' reasoning in mathematics is not as well developed as their arithmetic skills. The hub's mathematics leader works with teachers to drive improvement in this aspect of mathematics. Teachers are becoming more adept at developing pupils' reasoning abilities.
- Teachers often use questioning well to check and develop pupils understanding. Sometimes, however, closed questions restrict pupils' learning, for example in science.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Very nearly all parents agree that their child is happy in school. The school monitors the progress and welfare of all its pupils, especially those entitled to pupil premium funding and children looked after. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and feel safe. Bullying is very rare and pupils, staff and parents are confident that it would be effectively and quickly sorted out should it occur. Parents agree and one told inspectors, 'The school's focus on emotional intelligence and building social skills is hugely beneficial to my child.'
- Pupils are very aware of fundamental British values. Democracy is exemplified to pupils by involving them in decision making. Pupils challenge the term 'tolerance' as being too negative and actively celebrate difference. Work in pupils' books shows that they are aware of different faiths and Year 5 pupils have an appreciation of the warning signs of modern slavery.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' physical well-being. Pupils understand how to stay healthy. The school achieved 'healthy schools' and the 'school games silver award' last year. The 'gold award' is being assessed this year. All pupils participate in the 'daily mile' run.
- There are excellent home-school links through the family support worker. Her work enables teachers to focus on teaching and communicating with parents on educational matters.
- Pupils understand and can weigh up different views respecting difference. This was demonstrated through work in pupils' books. For example, some Year 5 pupils were able to write about the case for and against Catalan independence from Spain, using sophisticated arguments to come to reasoned judgements.
- The careers fair and enterprise activities contribute well to preparing pupils for life as consumers, producers and citizens. This helps to raise pupils' aspirations, setting them up to do well at secondary school.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They wear their uniform smartly. They present their work well. Pupils are very polite and courteous to visitors and to one another.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils work very well together and their behaviour plays an important role in the success of lessons. Pupils respond quickly and positively to teachers. For example, pupils respond immediately to the whistle indicating the end of morning break. Any low-level disruption is very rare.
- Before and after school, and at break and lunchtimes, pupils get on well together. Their conduct is exemplary. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and engage courteously in conversation, often instigating it.
- Exclusions are now rare and much reduced from the excessively high levels when the MAT took over the school. Pupils new to the school sometimes fall short of the high standards required by the school. Leaders work with these pupils to ensure that misbehaviour is not repeated.
- There have been very effective systems to improve attendance put in place over the last two years. These are implemented with consistency. As a result, attendance has improved sharply and is now at least in line with other primary schools. This is true of all groups of pupils.
- Very nearly all parents agree that behaviour is managed well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The summer 2017 national tests demonstrated that pupils' progress in reading and in mathematics is in line with other pupils nationally. Progress in writing is above the national average. The school's records show that progress of pupils has accelerated strongly over the last two years and continues to rise.
- The average progress for disadvantaged pupils is very positive in writing and in mathematics. It is more in line with other pupils nationally in reading.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard and above in the key stage 2 combined score across the tests was above average. The proportion achieving the higher standard in writing, reading and mathematics was particularly impressive.
- In key stage 1, pupils' attainment was below average. Current pupils in key stage 1 are making good progress from their different starting points.
- Across the school, pupils' progress is improving because of the consistently effective teaching. This is helping to address the legacy of poor progress in the past. For example, while pupils of different ages can use phonics to sound out unfamiliar words, it comes more fluently to younger pupils than to older pupils. Reading is improving strongly. Pupils are moving beyond working out sounds to understanding meaning. The school's broad curriculum is extremely helpful here.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the provision. They have taken effective action based on this. An example of the impact of their actions is that the proportion of boys reaching a good level in writing has risen from 47% to 65% this year.
- The EYFS leader has made links with nurseries that feed into the school to help

children's transition and school readiness.

- Planning is done centrally in the Harlow hub, then shared and tailored to the needs of individual classes. This ensures consistent coverage of the early years curriculum and progression in children's learning.
- The new assessment system enables parents to engage well with their children's learning and progress. It enables easy identification of age-related statements to support the assessment of children, and more detail on their progress than the previous system.
- Children make progress from typical or, often, just below typical standards on entry, to reach a good level of development, because the provision is appropriate for them. From the outset, children are assessed termly in phonics and in mathematics. These assessments show that children are making appropriate progress.
- The early years leader works across the Harlow hub. As she is not based in the school, her opportunities to ensure that her best practice is always implemented are restricted. For example, although she outlined detailed regular writing opportunities, progress in writing was not as clear as progress in other areas.

School details

Unique reference number	141379
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10036093

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Harry Mickle
Headteacher	James Hollinsley
Telephone number	01279 866 155
Website	www.netacademies.net/longwood
Email address	office@longwood.netacademies.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Longwood Primary Academy is an average-sized primary school situated in Harlow. The school became part of the NET Academies Trust in January 2015 and is in a cluster with four other local schools in Harlow.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors over two days.
- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from: lesson observations carried out jointly with senior leaders and short visits to lessons; discussions with pupils and staff; meetings with staff, the headteacher and the chief operating officer of the MAT; reviews of pupils' work in books; reviews of the school's website, documents and assessment information; and general observations of the daily operations of the school, including social areas.
- Inspectors analysed the 122 standard responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside the 11 free-text responses to the same questionnaire. No responses were received from the pupil or staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Dooley	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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