

Magna Carta Primary Academy

St John's Road, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex CM24 8JP

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2019

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have very high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. They set demanding standards for staff and pupils and provide strong support for them in working towards these.
- Children get off to a flying start in the early years. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Year on year, children make exceptional progress from their starting points. They are extremely well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils behave exceedingly well. They work hard and interact with each other and adults in a highly positive manner. There is a palpable harmony around the school.
- Leaders' support for pupils to take care of themselves and to be kind to others is a strength of the school. Pupils' kindness and respect for others stands out.
- Teachers use a variety of techniques well to implement leaders' curriculum plans. They typically question, encourage and praise pupils, helping pupils to develop and consolidate new learning.
- Although teaching, learning and assessment is strong, there remains some variability.
- The exceptionally strong progress that children make in Reception eases through key stage 1. Their progress, however, is nonetheless good overall.
- Leaders' well-developed curriculum supports pupils' good achievement in many subjects in key stage 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes, by:
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in mathematics, and greater depth in writing, so that the very strong progress pupils make in Reception is sustained through Years 1 and 2
 - sharing the best practice in the school so that all teaching, learning and assessment are as good as the best.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have very high expectations for pupils. This has led to exceptional provision in the early years, excellent behaviour and highly positive attitudes from pupils throughout the school, and good outcomes in key stage 1.
- Leaders' work to secure high standards in the early years has been extremely effective. Leaders combine a clear understanding of children's current level of development with unwaveringly high expectations. As a result, children make exceptional progress and are very well prepared to begin Year 1.
- Leaders have created a harmonious environment which is highly conducive to learning, welcoming and kind. Through the resolute promotion of respect for others and high expectations for positive behaviour, leaders have ensured that pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding.
- Staff are highly positive about the support they receive from school leaders and Burnt Mill Academy Trust (the trust). All of those who responded to Ofsted's survey of their views feel that leaders use professional development well. Staff who spoke with the inspector were enthusiastic about the training and mentoring they receive, both from within the school and from the trust. They said it is tailored well to their needs and that it has been helpful to them. Staff said they feel motivated and respected by leaders. They are proud to work at the school.
- Over the last school year, leaders have introduced ambitious plans for how subjects should be taught. These now underpin the good teaching evident across a range of subjects through key stage 1, and are directly contributing to pupils' good and improving outcomes.
- Leaders target the use of additional funding skilfully. Their use of additional funding for sport is successful in increasing pupils' participation. For example, most pupils attend the free after-school sports clubs. There are very small numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' chosen approach is to carefully consider each of their needs on an individual basis. They then determine and provide support to meet these needs specifically. As a result, these pupils are not held back by the identified barriers to their learning. They are fully involved in learning and make good progress from their starting points.
- All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. All of them agree, and most strongly agree, that the school is led and managed well. All staff who responded to Ofsted's survey of their views strongly agree with this sentiment.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body and the trust expect all pupils to excel. They set leaders the challenge of maximising each pupil's progress. Where outcomes are particularly strong, such as in the early years, governors challenge leaders to do even better. They focus on which pupils do not do as well as they possibly could, asking leaders to reflect on

what could be improved.

- The trust ensures that leaders, other staff and governors have the expertise they need to continue their drive for excellence. The trust trains staff and makes sure governors have the skills and knowledge they need to precisely challenge leaders. The trustees check pupils' outcomes and hold governors and leaders to account for the work of the school. They set the standard for excellence.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain accurate records of checks on adults who work in the school. They ensure that staff have appropriate training on how to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding records are well kept. They demonstrate leaders' vigilant approach to following up on concerns about pupils' well-being and show leaders following up on concerns, including with external agencies where appropriate.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe. Through lessons, assemblies and visiting speakers, pupils learn, for example, about stranger danger, fire safety and staying safe online. Pupils say they feel safe. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with well and that they have someone to talk to if something is worrying them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is typically strong. Teachers make good use of questioning to draw answers from pupils, to develop their thinking and to consolidate their knowledge. They praise pupils regularly and well and speak to pupils with enthusiasm. Pupils respond positively to these approaches. They listen, join in and learn.
- Mathematics teaching is underpinned by a well-considered and logically sequenced curriculum. Teachers follow this well, allowing pupils time to practise and consolidate their learning. Over time, teachers build up pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills well.
- A similar methodology supports the teaching of writing. Teachers focus on the essential skills pupils will need to support their long-term writing development. Pupils practise and improve these skills effectively over time.
- Teachers and leaders make good use of the new curriculum model to ensure that pupils develop and secure their understanding of a broad range of subjects. Pupils make good progress over time in subjects such as geography and history because teachers follow leaders' curriculum model effectively. Teachers and leaders check that pupils have developed a secure knowledge. Teachers make sure pupils revisit topics in different ways, as necessary.
- Leaders adopted a new approach to phonics teaching for this academic year. They made sure that staff were trained in delivering the school's chosen scheme and check that it is being delivered effectively. As a result, initial outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 1 indicate a rise in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard from the previous year. Teachers build on pupils' early reading well, successfully encouraging pupils to read at home and to read widely.

- Sometimes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not as high as they should be. Teachers do not always model the best use of standard English.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Diversity and respect are promoted and celebrated throughout the school. Being kind is a well understood and followed school rule. Posters about difference are displayed and rotated so the messages they convey stay fresh. Resources for teaching are considered carefully to ensure they promote positive messages about treating others well. All pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey of their views agree, and almost all strongly agree, that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.
- Leaders promote pupils' well-being extremely well. In addition to teaching physical education as part of the curriculum, participation in sport is promoted to such an extent that a very large proportion of pupils participate in sports during their free time. Pupils are safe from bullying and learn about how to manage their emotions. Anti-bullying ambassadors look after other pupils, with one encapsulating the prevalent attitude of many when explaining to the inspector, 'We don't want anyone to feel sad.'
- Almost all pupils who completed Ofsted's survey of their views strongly agree that the school encourages them to look after their physical health and most strongly agreed that the school encourages them to look after their emotional and mental health. All parents who responded to Parent View said their children are happy, safe and well-looked after.
- Pupils' are self-assured. They join in with enthusiasm during lessons, contributing and sharing ideas. They speak with confidence to and in front of adults and their peers. Pupils were seen by the inspector, for example, sensibly discussing their feelings with their friends, testing out their understanding of topics verbally with teachers and quickly retrieving and sharing information from books.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Leaders have implemented a clear policy for managing behaviour based on three rules: be safe, be kind and work hard. Responses in the staff survey were overwhelmingly positive about the implementation and impact of these rules. Their effectiveness is strongly evident throughout the school, in the way pupils speak and behave.
- Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well. In lessons, they are attentive and interested. They respond quickly to instructions, do not disrupt learning and are keen to get on and to learn.
- During less-structured times, pupils create effective relationships together and play and use resources very well. They treat each other kindly and with respect.

- School records show that instances of poor behaviour are extremely rare. In line with leaders' committed approach to ensuring that pupils respect others, there are very few incidents of intolerance. Where they do occur, they are followed up thoroughly and well. No pupil has ever been excluded from the school.
- Attendance levels are consistently high. Leaders explain to parents the importance of attending school regularly. They celebrate with pupils the best attendance in the school every week. Moreover, pupils enjoy their time in school and want to be there.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders are continuing to work on ensuring that pupils achieve exceptionally well. In some areas, such as in reading, pupils are achieving very well and are set up effectively for their time in key stage 2.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils are making good progress in writing. However, indications from this academic year show that the proportion of those working at greater depth in writing is smaller than in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils' work shows that there is a clear sequence of learning which ensures that pupils develop their mathematical skills well. In this first year of key stage 1 outcomes, the indications are that a good proportion of children have reached the required standard in mathematics. However, this is lower than in English.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below average. Leaders have subsequently changed the way in which phonics is taught and initial outcomes this year show that the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard has risen.
- This year, leaders are starting to show that pupils' reading skills are developing well, so that by the end of Year 2 pupils enjoy reading and speak enthusiastically about the different types of text they choose to read. They are prepared well for moving into key stage 2.
- Across other subjects, pupils learn well. They study a range of subjects such as history, geography and science, consolidating and building on what they have learned as they move through Years 1 and 2.
- The proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND are too small to report on without identifying them. Overall, individual needs are thoughtfully considered and the necessary support provided so pupils make good progress from individual starting points.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have been highly successful in securing high-quality early years provision over time. They make sure early years welfare requirements are met and have created an ambitious culture in which children rapidly and securely develop the skills, abilities and knowledge they will need as they move through the school.
- Children in the early years are extremely confident. They take great pride in showing their work and discussing their ideas. Children spoke enthusiastically with the inspector

about what they were doing, why they were doing it and how they decided to go about their tasks. They willingly share their sensible ideas, work very well together and are keen to join in with class discussions. They make the most of their time in child-initiated learning and consistently apply themselves to the plentiful meaningful activities available to them inside and outdoors.

- Adults ensure that children make the most of their time in the early years. They are quick to identify what children do well and what they could develop further. They provide skilful teaching to help them move on. Staff involve parents quickly, providing information, resources and guidance to parents so that they can help their children build on the skills and knowledge learned in Reception while at home. They respond to information which parents provide and their own assessments of children's learning to make sure that what children do is closely matched to their development needs.
- In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above that found nationally. Children now in Reception continue to make substantial progress across a range of areas of learning, including writing and mathematics.
- As a result of the consistently strong provision in the early years, children are exceptionally well prepared for key stage 1 study.

School details

Unique reference number	142771
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10088628

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Dan Kolinsky
Headteacher	Marios Solomonides
Telephone number	01279 703484
Website	www.magnacartaacademy.org
Email address	reception@magnacartaacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Magna Carta Primary Academy is a free school which opened in 2016. It currently has pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- The school is part of the Burnt Mill Academy Trust. The trust sets the strategic direction of the school while delegating responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the local governing body. At the present time, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust is also the chair of the local governing body.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and those with an education, health and care plan are below average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnics groups and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are similar to the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited classes across the school, reviewed the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. He met with the headteacher, other members of staff, the CEO of the multi-academy trust and four other members of the local governing body.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school, improvement plans, safeguarding records, curriculum plans and documentation relating to the school's use of pupil premium funding. He considered the school's information on pupils' attendance, progress and behaviour, and reviewed minutes of meetings of the local governing body.
- The inspector considered nine responses to Ofsted's survey of staff's views, 29 responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views and 39 responses to Parent View, as well as 39 responses to the free-text option. He spoke with parents at the start of the school day and with pupils during their free time and in an organised meeting.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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