

# Inspection of a good school: Markyate Village School and Nursery

Cavendish Road, Markyate, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 8PT

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Inspection dates:

5–6 December 2019

## **Outcome**

Markyate Village School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at this village school are sociable, confident and very well cared for.

Pupils enjoy taking part in clubs such as art, mindfulness drawing, and dance. They also welcome opportunities to go on trips to places like RAF Halton and participate in carol services at St John's Church. Pupils attend residential visits such as the Year 6 trip to Aylmerton Field Study Centre in Norfolk. Year 6 pupils are school sports captains and house prefects. They also lead clubs for younger children and assist with lunchtime routines. School ambassadors promote the school library and pupils can stand for election as school councillors.

Pupils enjoy the topics they study. They talk confidently about their recent learning. For example, older pupils were enthusiastic about writing a manifesto showing they understand democracy and enjoy having various debates.

Pupils demonstrate their good behaviour through their 'proud walking' in corridors, and their 'legendary lining up'. In lessons, they listen carefully to adults and to each other. They know that staff will listen carefully if they are worried about anything, including any concerns about bullying.

Most parents are positive about the school's work. They value the speed with which leaders deal with any concerns they have.

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

The teaching of reading is particularly strong. Teachers encourage a love of reading. Teachers select high-quality texts such as 'The Owl Who was Afraid of the Dark', 'The Christmasaurus' and 'Scrapman'. The vocabulary and content of these extend pupils' learning and link to the topics they are studying. This increases pupils' understanding and helps them to remember and find out the meaning of new words. English lessons include activities which develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, such as comprehension,

spelling and grammar. By the time they leave the school many pupils are good readers.

The teaching of mathematics is sound and well organised. Leaders have introduced a new approach to mathematics teaching, designed to give more emphasis to mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. Teachers also want to ensure that pupils' arithmetic and calculation skills become even stronger. Pupils are not always given enough work which challenges them sufficiently.

Leaders are in the process of reviewing the curriculum to make sure that what is taught helps pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well. In some subjects, such as personal, social and health education (PSHE), physical education (PE), music and art, this work is already well developed. In other subjects, including history, geography, modern foreign languages (MFL) and computing, there is more work still to be done.

PSHE is a particular strength of the school. High-quality work is seen throughout the school. The PSHE curriculum leader has developed a clear set of plans which encourage pupils to think about themselves and others. When learning about similarities and differences, for example, pupils explained the need to value the uniqueness of every individual.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support and are fully included in all aspects of school life. Staff are well trained in meeting pupils' needs and, as a result, pupils with SEND make good progress in their learning and personal development. Many parents talk very positively of the help they get from the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). This is similarly the case for disadvantaged pupils who also receive effective additional support.

The vast majority of pupils behave well. There are a few pupils with challenging behaviour, particularly those with complex needs. However, leaders are effective in managing the behaviour so it does not disrupt the learning of others.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. Pupils benefit from a range of wider opportunities which complement their learning, such as visits linked to their curriculum learning. Pupils benefit from the positive relationships between pupils, staff and parents.

Attendance rates, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, have been below the national average for the last three years. Leaders have reviewed attendance and recent improvements to systems for promoting good attendance are newly in place. The school is well led and managed. Parents have every confidence in the new headteacher. Staff are confident that leaders take an interest in their professional development and their well-being.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The thorough recording and monitoring of pupils' concerns help ensure that child protection procedures are secure and efficient. Adults have a clear understanding about their roles and responsibilities for keeping everyone safe. Leaders remain vigilant, and, as a result, the culture of safeguarding is strong. Governors monitor leaders' actions to be certain that the correct checks are made on everyone who works in the school.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The teaching of mathematics is well sequenced. Pupils have opportunities to apply their mathematical skills through reasoning and problem-solving. However, the level of challenge in lessons is not consistently high enough to ensure that pupils benefit from thinking hard and have the chance to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders are in the process of making changes to the curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics. These changes are designed to improve the sequence of learning. In some subjects this work has already been done effectively. Leaders need to continue this work for all subjects so pupils' quality of education is effective in all areas of the curriculum.
- Attendance has been below the national average, and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in particular is too low. Leaders have begun to give more priority to improving attendance and this work needs to continue to improve all pupils' attendance.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the third section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 4–5 November 2010.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117127
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110290
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	253
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Worden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Johnson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.markyate.herts.sch.uk/">www.markyate.herts.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 March 2016

## Information about this school

- Markyate Village School and Nursery is an average-sized primary school.
- A new headteacher joined the school in September 2019.
- 85% of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils receiving special educational needs support is higher than the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- As part of this inspection, I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. I also met with teachers, office staff and pupils.
- I met with governors, including the chair of governors, and with a representative from the local authority.

- I gathered the views of parents in the playground before school.
- To inspect the school's safeguarding arrangements, I spoke to the designated safeguarding leads, members of staff, parents, governors and pupils. I checked the single central record and a sample of safeguarding records.
- I observed playtimes and lunchtime and spoke to pupils about their school experiences.
- Reading, mathematics and PSHE were considered as part of this inspection. I spoke to curriculum leaders, visited lessons, carried out work scrutinies and met with teachers and pupils to learn about the quality of education.

### **Inspection team**

Nick Rudman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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