

Inspection of Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery

Trent Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2JH

Inspection dates: 23–24 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school where everyone is valued. Pupils work and play happily together and show respect and tolerance to any differences between them. Staff expect pupils to behave well and, as a result, they conduct themselves sensibly.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and enjoy lessons. They respond positively to teachers' high aspirations. Individuals are supported very well, including the most vulnerable.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop interests and take on responsibilities. For example, they run the tuck shop, lead assemblies and hold positions such as house captains, with pride. They join in with the many free clubs on offer. The 'Mighty Oak' public speaking programme develops pupils' self-confidence. Pupils told us about the school's success in sporting activities. It is renowned locally for achievements in dodgeball competitions.

Pupils feel safe. They told us bullying is uncommon. When it does occur, teachers deal with it swiftly and appropriately.

Most parents and carers who responded to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and those who spoke with inspectors are very supportive of the school. Their views are summed up by one parent who commented 'My children thrive at the school and are happy to be there.'

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and rich curriculum. It is carefully planned so that pupils build up skills and knowledge over time. The curriculum in most subjects is taught effectively. In particular, teaching in English, mathematics and science leads to pupils achieving well. In a few of the foundation subjects, such as history and art, teachers' subject knowledge is less strong. Sometimes this limits what pupils are able to achieve.

Teachers quickly spot when pupils do not understand something. They make sure they give pupils extra help to catch up. Teachers adapt activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so they enjoy their learning and achieve well.

The youngest pupils are given a solid start in reading. Adults teach and plan the skills of early reading well. Skilled teaching further up the school helps pupils to build on this good start. Pupils become fluent readers and develop their understanding of the books they read.

Pupils' attitudes towards learning are positive. They respond enthusiastically to well-chosen learning activities. They work quietly when asked to do so and show determination and resilience in their learning.

Children are safe and happy in the early years. Adults make sure classrooms and outdoor areas provide interesting and engaging learning activities. As a result, children show high levels of interest, curiosity and concentration. Adults support their learning effectively, especially their language development. Leaders have designed an ambitious and carefully planned curriculum that makes sure children are ready for moving into Year 1.

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' personal development. The values of the school are very much lived out on a daily basis; pupils know what they are and talk about them confidently. Pupils learn to respect others' differences, both in school and in the wider world. They learn about being responsible citizens, for example, through charity work and visits from residents of local care homes. Pupils know the importance of leading healthy lives. They take advantage of the many sports activities on offer. They learn about healthy relationships, both online and in the real world. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils' spiritual development and preparation for life beyond school.

Leaders' work to improve the school has been effective. They regularly check that their high expectations are being met by staff. They use the information they find to make appropriate plans for further improvement. Leaders support the staff team well and are realistic about the pressures they face. Staff value the regular training that helps them become better at their jobs.

Trustees and governors are clear about their responsibilities and carry them out diligently. They check that what leaders are telling them is accurate. They are very involved in school life and know the school well.

Most parents are positive about the school and understand what leaders are trying to achieve. Leaders work hard to keep parents informed. They provide opportunities for parents to take part in the life of the school. A small number of parents are less positive. Leaders are working hard to help these parents understand the approaches they take to various aspects of school life.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the safeguarding of pupils. All necessary checks on adults are thorough and kept up to date. Staff are well trained to spot any safeguarding concerns. They know what action to take and how to report concerns swiftly. Leaders' actions taken as a result of these concerns are documented carefully and followed up.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe. They take part in events such as Anti-Bullying Week and learn about staying safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects curriculum implementation is sometimes limited because teachers' subject knowledge is less strong. As a result, concepts are not always explained in a way that stretches pupils' thinking and deepens their knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge to deliver the curriculum with high ambition in all subjects.
- Leaders provide well for pupils' personal development and their understanding of moral, social and cultural issues. However, leaders need to do more to ensure that pupils develop a deeper understanding of both spiritual issues and of the world of work.

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 the school and 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

Unique reference number	144303
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10121328
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Isabelle Bailey
Headteacher	Matthew Poyton
Website	www.lawfordmead.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Lawford Mead Primary and Nursery School was formed from an amalgamation of Lawford Mead Junior School and Lawford Mead Infants School in 2015. This is the first inspection since the school amalgamated.
- The school became part of the HERA Academy Trust in 2017. The trust comprises two primary schools. The trust holds overall responsibility for governance but delegates some responsibilities to the local governing committee.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average and in the highest 20% of schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average and in the highest 20% of schools nationally.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff, including a newly qualified teacher and support staff. We also met with the special educational needs coordinator and the family support, well-being and inclusion

officer. In these meetings, we discussed aspects of the school's curriculum and provision.

- We held discussions with trustees and a representative from the local governing committee.
- We met with the safeguarding leaders to check that safeguarding procedures and processes were effective. We also checked the single central record to ensure that recruitment checks on staff have taken place.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school. We talked with pupils to find out their views on the school.
- We talked with parents and took their responses to surveys into account.
- We examined a range of documentation including the school self-evaluation, the school development plan, curriculum plans and information concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- During this inspection, reading, mathematics, science, history and art were considered in greater detail than other subjects in the school. This entailed: meeting with leaders to discuss these areas of the curriculum; visiting lessons; talking with teachers: looking at pupils' workbooks and speaking with pupils about their learning. The lead inspector also listened to younger pupils read.

Inspection team

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