

Inspection of an outstanding school: Little Mead Primary Academy

Gosforth Road, Southmead, Bristol, Bristol BS10 6DS

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff make sure that Little Mead is a friendly and welcoming place to learn. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They speak positively about the help they receive from a range of staff, including the pastoral support team. This makes them feel safe and valued.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' social and academic learning. They want them to achieve the very best in all they do. Recent improvements to the curriculum are helping pupils to be curious learners and perform well.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is typically calm and sensible. At social times, pupils enjoy many activities, including football, climbing and designing games. They understand and follow the school rules of 'be safe, be respectful and be kind'. Pupils look out for each other and say that disagreements and bullying are rare. They are sure that leaders and staff will act on any concerns they raise.

Leaders successfully prioritise pupils' personal development. They have written a bespoke curriculum to help pupils keep themselves safe in school and the community. For example, pupils are taught about local issues, such as road safety and criminal exploitation. Pupils are well prepared when they move on to secondary school.

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

Leaders, including those across the trust, have planned an ambitious curriculum. They have introduced 'golden threads' of time, technology and human endeavour to make learning relevant to pupils. Leaders' curriculum thinking includes the essential knowledge and vocabulary pupils need to gain. Lessons build on what pupils have previously learned. In history, for example, pupils in key stage 1 use their knowledge of materials to explain

why the Great Fire of London spread so quickly. In key stage 2, pupils debate social and moral issues, such as slavery and human rights. They use this knowledge to gain a rich understanding of historical events and change over time. Leaders recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the development of some subjects. They have plans in place to develop the remaining curriculum areas.

When children start school, there is a strong focus on phonics. Teachers follow a consistent approach to introducing new letters and sounds. In the Reception and Year 1 classes, pupils can blend sounds together to read simple words. Pupils read from books that match the sounds they are learning in class. This helps to secure their phonics knowledge.

Leaders and staff use assessment well to identify gaps in pupils' learning, some as a result of COVID-19. In reading, many pupils benefit from extra support to build their confidence. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they read. They particularly enjoy the attractive library space and how teachers read to them each day. However, a minority of pupils in Year 2 and beyond do not read as fluently as they could. They do not consistently receive the precise support they need to get better at reading.

Leaders' work to increase staff's subject knowledge is well underway. They make effective use of local experts and research to develop good practice. For instance, staff sing songs and rhymes in the early years to enrich children's language and vocabulary. Teachers use 'flashbacks' and 'reviews' to help pupils commit new learning to long-term memory. Pupils say this helps new knowledge to stick.

Leaders have established an inclusive and caring culture. Staff adapt lessons well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience success. In mathematics, teachers break learning down into small, manageable steps. This means that lessons progressively build on what pupils know and can do.

The majority of pupils behave well and settle quickly to learn. Pupils with more complex needs receive an appropriate personalised approach. For example, the pastoral team provides effective support for pupils who find it difficult to regulate their emotions.

Pupils gain a range of knowledge about different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles. Teachers equip pupils with the information they need to make considered choices. For example, pupils feel confident to challenge racism and discrimination. They say that everyone is accepted at Little Mead, regardless of difference. Pupils enjoy activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle. These include sporting events and running club.

Trustees and governors are well informed about the school's priorities. Effective systems are in place to hold leaders to account. Staff agree that leaders consider their well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the implementation of the wider curriculum and the development of pupils' reading fluency may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of their work. Staff receive regular training. They are vigilant in spotting pupils who may be at risk. Leaders respond swiftly to offer pupils and families the support they need. Governors and trustees ensure that appropriate checks are in place for the safe recruitment of staff.

Through the curriculum, pupils are well informed of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have an age-appropriate understanding of the dangers of drugs and crime. Pupils know how to stay safe online and within the community where they live.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are at the early stage of implementing new curriculum thinking in some subjects. Where this is the case, pupils do not develop as deep an understanding as they do in other areas. Leaders should continue to implement the curriculum as planned so that pupils have the key knowledge and skills they need to succeed in all subjects.
- A minority of pupils do not receive the precise support they need to get better at reading. As a result, they do not read as fluently as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff are expertly trained to help those pupils who require extra support to read with confidence and fluency.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in February 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	138900
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10211913
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	461
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anabel Sexton
Headteacher	Jenna Cooke
Website	www.littlemead.bristol.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 – 3 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Little Mead Primary Academy is a part of the Endeavour Academy Trust. This trust comprises a group of four primary schools situated in north Bristol and south Gloucestershire.
- The school has its own local governing body with delegated responsibilities.
- The school has an on-site nursery provision managed by school leaders.
- The school uses one registered alternative learning provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, other school staff, the chief executive officer and representatives from the board of trustees and local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects, including personal, social, health and economic education.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. The inspector talked to pupils and staff about safe working practices.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses, and responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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