

Inspection of Fern House School

Chesterfield Primary School, Chesterfield Road, Enfield EN3 6BG

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff work together well to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning. They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The curriculum is ambitious and personalised to meet each pupil's needs. The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils leave the school well prepared for successful adult living.

The teaching, therapeutic, well-being and safeguarding teams work seamlessly together. They create a safe and supportive environment. Pupils know that staff care for them and will help them to stay safe. Staff are skilled at dealing with pupils' concerns and anxieties. This helps pupils to build their confidence and achieve well in their studies.

Staff set clear routines and make sure pupils know how they are expected to behave. When pupils feel anxious or overwhelmed, staff help them calm down. As a result, pupils behave well. Staff investigate any allegations of bullying. They work with all parties concerned to help pupils reflect on their actions and find ways to avoid similar problems in future.

Pupils enjoy the many enrichment activities on offer. These range from team sports, canoeing and horse riding to music and art therapies, for example. Members of staff often go the extra mile, such as taking pupils bicycle riding at the weekend.

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

Leaders aim to help pupils overcome their difficulties so that they can achieve well across all subjects. Pupils' specific needs and circumstances are accurately understood. When pupils join the school, staff assess their well-being needs and academic knowledge. They use this information well to personalise the curriculum. Staff work with pupils to develop their resilience as well as communication and social skills. They also help pupils identify ways to manage their emotions so they can learn in a calm manner. Leaders adapt the curriculum and teaching to address pupils' knowledge gaps. This holistic approach supports pupils to gain new knowledge and prepare for adulthood. It also means that pupils typically behave well and lessons are rarely disrupted.

Sometimes pupils join the school without being able to read with fluency. Staff use a well-structured phonics scheme to teach pupils to read. Reading takes place daily in every class and pupils read to adults regularly. Pupils of all ages enjoy listening to stories read to them by the teacher. Pupils quickly learn to read fluently and enjoy reading books for pleasure.

Leaders have thought about what they want pupils to know and remember across different subjects. They plan for pupils to learn knowledge in small chunks in a well-ordered way. This approach enables pupils to build on what they have learned

before. It also helps pupils to make links to other subjects. For example, when pupils learned about rivers in geography, they made links to their scientific knowledge of the water cycle. Teachers make sure pupils revisit their work so that they can remember key knowledge in the long term. In Year 3 to Year 11, leaders' thinking about pupils' progression through the curriculum has been made explicit. However, in a few subjects leaders have not given as much thought about how the subject content covered in these year groups follows on from the knowledge taught in the new class for younger pupils.

Teachers attend training, increasing their knowledge of the subjects they teach. In a few subjects, however, leaders and teachers do not have a deep understanding of some key subject-specific concepts. This includes, for example, how art is used to express ideas and convey meaning. As a result, some teaching does not routinely support pupils to gain an in-depth understanding of these ideas.

Secondary pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of impartial careers information, education, advice and guidance. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is broad. It offers pupils several bespoke pathways that cater for their needs and aspirations. Leaders arrange work experience for pupils at local businesses. Staff also support some pupils to get part-time jobs while they are still at school. All pupils continue into post-16 education. They study college courses in construction, sports leadership and media, for example.

Staff provide pupils with a comprehensive and very well considered range of enrichment activities. These contribute to the excellent provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils debate a range of sensitive issues, such as China's former one-child policy. Older pupils read to younger ones, and all get involved in charitable events. Pupils also take part in workshops led by external organisations visiting the school. These include, for instance, theatre group presentations on knife crime. Staff teach pupils the importance of establishing healthy relationships, and consent, for example.

Leaders take care of staff welfare. They provide staff with counselling and organise social events, for example. Staff said that leaders have taken steps to reduce their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families well. They are well trained so are able to identify signs that might mean a pupil is at risk. They are vigilant and report all concerns to the safeguarding leaders in a timely fashion. Leaders have close links with a wide range of agencies. They are robust in getting professional help for pupils and their families who may be at risk and who need help to support their welfare.

The curriculum provides extensive opportunities for pupils to learn about risks and how to stay safe, including from being groomed online, for example.

There are secure practices in place to vet applicants' suitability to work with pupils before they are appointed to work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders do not have a deep understanding of important subject-specific concepts that thread through the subjects. This reduces their expertise in being able to deepen pupils' knowledge. Leaders and teachers should sharpen their own knowledge of subject-specific concepts and then think through how, in turn, they will support pupils to gain a deeper knowledge.
- In a few subjects, leaders have planned what they want pupils to know from key stage 2 onwards without fully considering how this subject content builds on what is taught in the new key stage 1 classes. This means that, when pupils enter key stage 2, teaching is unable to follow on systematically from pupils' prior learning. Leaders should clarify exactly how they expect pupils' learning to progress over time, starting from the classes in Years 1 and 2.

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	145232
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10212308
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John West
Headteacher	Zoe Hussain
Website	https://www.fernhouseschool.org
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Fern House School is a sponsored academy in the ELT Partnership Trust. It opened in November 2017. When its predecessor school, Aylands School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school had a no formal designation section 8 inspection in June 2019. Inspectors reported that the school's arrangements for safeguarding were effective.
- The executive headteacher took up her post in January 2020.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- School leaders do not use any alternative education.
- The school is currently housed in temporary accommodation at Chesterfield Primary School, Chesterfield Road, Enfield, EN3 6BG. Leaders plan to move into a new purpose-built site in January 2023.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and

training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors held discussions with leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the vice-chair of trustees, the chair of the local education committee (LEC) and other trustees and members of the LEC. They also spoke with the chief executive officer, the local authority special educational needs leader and an independent special educational needs consultant who supports the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including information related to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff. Inspectors also looked at records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. They took account of the seven responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and telephone conversations with two parents. There were no responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Bedeau

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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