

Inspection of Harlowbury Primary School

Watlington Road, Old Harlow, Harlow, Essex CM17 0DX

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 March 2022

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?

Harlowbury is a place where pupils gain impressive communication skills. Pupils have daily opportunities to learn and apply new words that are important for their increasing knowledge.

Pupils say that everyone is included, no matter what. They know that everyone is unique and that their differences are celebrated. This is shown in how pupils of different ages and classes work and play side-by-side in harmony.

During their time in school, pupils are guided appropriately to understand the world in which they live. They draw on their learning from lessons effectively. Pupils can see how the knowledge they are amassing will support them to make important choices, both now and in the future. For example, pupils shared, with compassion, their understanding of the impact of deforestation and use of palm oil. They also make links with subjects they learn and jobs they might want to do when they grow up.

Pupils make positive behaviour choices across the school, and disruption to learning is rare. Pupils typically said that bullying does not happen in school. They know that it is important to tell an adult if they are concerned about something. They are confident that adults in school listen and will take action to remedy any issues that arise.

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

Leaders have set out an ambitious plan for what pupils should learn. This ambition begins from the moment children join Reception. It includes a sharp focus on learning vocabulary and the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. All staff contribute to the important work of helping pupils become expert communicators.

A strong ethos of inclusion is well established throughout the school. This means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make very good progress. Staff working with pupils in the speech and language centre have notable expertise. Staff plan lessons that are precisely matched to the needs of each individual pupil. Strategies that support pupils with the greatest needs are clearly understood by staff and used consistently effectively across the school. This is giving all pupils the skills to listen and speak with confidence.

Teachers are effective in helping pupils to remember what they are learning. Assessment routines include the chance for pupils to have extra practice and reinforce their understanding. Classroom 'floor books' and helpful displays are useful to pupils. They access these independently to find solutions or prompt their memory when they are stuck. There are a couple of areas in the curriculum where leaders'

curriculum thinking is more recently developed. Leaders are working with teachers to ensure that pupils draw just as confidently on knowledge gained in these areas.

Pupils are taught phonics effectively from the moment they start school. Pupils enjoy practising and applying their phonics knowledge. They do this successfully as they read and explore new stories in their classrooms. Pupils quickly take advantage of these established building blocks of early reading. Staff provide high-quality, daily opportunities for pupils to use story maps. In these sessions, pupils rehearse storytelling, using the visual prompts provided. This helps pupils make strong connections between their thoughts and their speech. It supports pupils, including those with SEND, to commit new, important language to their memories. This is having a significant impact on pupils' achievement across the curriculum.

In early years, leaders have set curriculum goals that match the needs of the children in the class. These curriculum goals support meaningful learning activities, which are developing children's confidence effectively. Staff listen skilfully and observe carefully as children explore their learning through play. Staff use these opportunities to maximise learning, so children achieve their best.

Pupils' understanding about important values is secure. Through assemblies, pupils can hear from interesting and expert visitors. This helps to explore issues that pupils need to know about, such as fire safety. Pupils know that exercise and a healthy diet are good for both your body and mind. Pupils are mature when talking about a recent assembly topic on individual liberty. They show good understanding of diversity and equality issues. Across the school, behaviour is consistently good. Pupils engage fully with their learning and have fun during playtimes.

Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the important roles they play in school improvement. An established partnership with leaders is supporting effective improvement where weaknesses are identified. Parents and carers appreciate that the school is a safe environment where pupils are happy to learn. However, a substantial minority of parents say that they want to know more about their child's learning in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Designated safeguarding leads in the school meet routinely to review the support in place for pupils. All staff have regular and effective training to support this shared responsibility. Pupils feel able to communicate their worries to trusted adults. When concerns are communicated, leaders are quick to respond.

The curriculum is carefully designed to help pupils know how to keep themselves safe. This includes areas such as road and online safety. Pupils share confidently the strategies they use to keep themselves safe when using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of areas in the curriculum, leaders' plans are established, but more recently introduced. Leaders should continue, with clarity and focus, to make sure that the content of newly developed plans is presented by teachers in a way that supports pupils to confidently recall important knowledge, as seen in other areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders have not always communicated their plans or visions clearly enough for parents. As a result, a substantial minority of parents feel that they lack understanding of the learning of their children in school. Leaders and governors should continue the work started to build constructive links with the parent and carer community, providing the clear information that parents need.

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	144664
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10212027
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robert Smith
Headteacher	Victoria Early
Website	www.harlowbury.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- There is breakfast and after-school childcare provision, managed by the governing body, on the school site.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 had 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 held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, early years leader and the inclusion manager.
- Inspectors met with two members of the local governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked

at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and, where relevant, looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector met with designated safeguarding leads and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school evaluation and development plans, and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 37 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the views of staff working in the school.
- Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil at their school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils across the school site at different times of the day, including playtime.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Karen Stanton

Ofsted Inspector

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