

# Inspection of a good school: Little Parndon Primary Academy

Park Mead, Harlow, Essex CM20 1PU

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Inspection dates:

9 and 10 March 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good 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?**

Pupils at Little Parndon Primary Academy enjoy coming to school and learning new things. The school is a buzz of excitement inside the classrooms and on the playground. Pupils are eager to learn and play with their friends. Pupils look forward to receiving tokens to choose a book from the new 'book vending machine'.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the many opportunities staff provide for them, such as attending sports and music clubs. Pupils are also proud to take on responsibilities such as being a house captain or play leader. Older pupils enjoy reading and playing with the youngest children in the school.

Pupils know the expectations for behaviour and most pupils can demonstrate behaviours that are calm and kind. However, there is a group of pupils who are unable to regulate their emotions. Their unpredictable behaviour is having a negative impact on other pupils in the school.

Pupils say they feel safe. They know who to talk to and also use the 'worry boxes' available to them. Pupils say there is not any name-calling about what pupils look or act like. Pupils are friendly and encouraging to each other. Bullying does not happen often but if it does, pupils say that staff sort it out. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.

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

Leaders have developed a well-designed, broad curriculum. The curriculum content for each subject builds on what pupils have learned in previous years and lessons. Leaders have focused on introducing new vocabulary, ambitious texts and practical ways to help pupils remember new learning. For example, in geography, pupils worked in pairs to

complete a self-assessment, checked and corrected their answers and then applied their new and previously learned knowledge to remember more about mountains.

Teachers' subject knowledge and teaching are strong across subjects. Staff check pupils understand tasks and are ready for new learning. Staff are quick to correct any errors. Teachers break learning down into small steps so that pupils are ready for what they need to learn next. For example, in art and design, the teacher explained how to create a balanced composition and how to focus on the centrepiece when drawing a still life.

Too many pupils do not read confidently enough by the end of Year 2. The early reading curriculum and delivery are not consistent. Leaders have started a new phonics programme, but this is still in the early stages of implementation. Children start learning sounds from when they join the school in the early years but, moving through the programme, some pupils are not keeping up. This is because some sessions are not planned or taught precisely enough to help pupils get better at reading. Although extra sessions are being delivered to pupils, these are not helping pupils catch up. Books chosen by teachers for pupils to read are often too challenging, and pupils struggle to read them. Staff have not been suitably trained in how to support the weakest readers to achieve well.

Leaders encourage a love of reading and prioritise this in the curriculum. Older pupils are keen to talk about their favourite books and authors. They read for pleasure each day.

Most pupils demonstrate good behaviour, including children in the early years. They respond to the consistent system of rewards and warnings and enjoy working independently. Pupils want to do well in their learning. Most lessons visited were calm and productive, but older pupils reported it is not always like this. Leaders are striving for an inclusive environment and records demonstrate there has been improved behaviour of pupils.

Leaders ensure that, generally, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. This is ensuring that most pupils with SEND achieve well. However, on occasions, the behaviour of pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH), impacts negatively on their access to the curriculum. Leaders have not ensured that teachers have the appropriate training to manage the behaviour of these pupils. This does, on occasion, result in pupils with SEMH needs disrupting the learning for others.

Leaders have considered the wider personal development of pupils effectively. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to access a range of responsibilities that they enjoy, such as being part of the school council. Pupils talk excitedly about going swimming and visiting local churches and museums. These opportunities are providing pupils with life skills and experiences to ensure they are ready for the next stages of their education when they leave Year 6.

The leaders and the local governing body (LGB) are aware of the priorities for the school and have started to action these appropriately, including making changes to the leadership team. Trustees demonstrate that there is capacity within the trust to support the new leaders going forward with the identified priorities.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the implementation of a new early reading curriculum and the implementation of an adapted curriculum for pupils with complex needs may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all concerns, however minor, are recorded and followed up swiftly. Leaders work diligently with other agencies to make sure that pupils are kept safe from harm.

Staff have up-to-date training and receive regular briefings about current safeguarding issues, such as criminal exploitation and domestic violence. Staff know the signs to look out for and report even the smallest concerns.

Pupils learn about how to keep safe online and know how to report any issues. This could be face to face with an adult or through the 'worry box' system. Staff adapt the curriculum as needed from any concerns raised, for example positive and negative relationships.

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

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

- The teaching of phonics is not consistently good. This is impacting negatively on how well pupils learn to read, in particular for the weakest readers in the school. Pupils who are behind in their reading are not being given the correct help to catch up quickly. Leaders must ensure that staff have the training and supervision to enable them to implement the chosen phonics scheme effectively. Leaders need to ensure that they improve the teaching of early reading, helping the weakest readers to catch up quickly and read to a good standard.
- On occasions, the behaviour of pupils with complex SEMH needs disrupts the learning of others. This is because staff are not clear about the expectations of behaviour and learning for these pupils. Staff need further training to be able to precisely plan and teach a curriculum that meets pupils' needs. Leaders must check that staff are able to implement what they have been trained to do and that teachers' actions are having a positive impact on the behaviour of pupils with complex SEMH needs.

## 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 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 good in January 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140019
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211138
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Drayton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sophie Laing (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.littleparndonacademy.org/">www.littleparndonacademy.org/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Burnt Mill Academy Trust.
- There have been significant leadership changes during the last year.
- The acting headteacher is also the executive headteacher of five primary schools in the trust. They also hold the role of deputy chief executive officer (CEO).
- The school has a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.

## 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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the acting headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the director of SEND for the trust, the acting special educational needs coordinator and teachers.
- The inspector also met with the educational welfare officer and the human resources director for the trust and the office manager.
- The inspector met with the CEO of the trust and the chair of the LGB.

- To inspect safeguarding the inspector checked the school's single central record, considered the safeguarding policy and spoke to staff and pupils. The inspector looked at case files and discussed a range of safeguarding records with the designated safeguarding leads and the director of safeguarding for the trust
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector was joined on the inspection for one day by Marc White, HMI, who specifically carried out a deep dive in mathematics. He met with the director of mathematics for the trust, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and teachers, looked at pupils' work and scrutinised planning.
- The inspector visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in design and technology, French and geography.
- The inspector spoke to parents when pupils were being dropped off in the playground. The inspector spoke to pupils in the playground and the lunch hall. The inspector visited the breakfast club.
- The inspector considered 64 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 64 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. The inspector reviewed 21 responses to the online staff survey. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.

## **Inspection team**

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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