

# Inspection of a good school: The Orchard Primary School

Gammons Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 5JW

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 June 2022

## **Outcome**

The Orchard Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils have wonderful opportunities at The Orchard Primary School. They can be themselves and are respected for who they are. Pupils grow into responsible and thoughtful young people. They know that everyone is different, but no matter what a person's beliefs, religion or background, they treat each other as individuals.

Adults expect much from pupils. Pupils work hard and behave very well because adults set high standards. Pupils enjoy lessons and concentrate without being disturbed by others. Bullying rarely happens. When it does, leaders act quickly to put a stop to it.

Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy. They know it is important to be physically active. Older pupils know how to look after their mental health. They know about the negative impact social media can sometimes have. Pupils are happy to talk about their feelings and will talk to an adult if they are upset or feeling down.

Pupils understand the school's values such as respect, resilience and integrity. They put these values into action every day. Pupils understand what it means to be resilient. They do not give up in lessons when they are faced with work that makes them think hard.

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

Leaders have created a culture where everyone is included. Pupils value and celebrate the differences between themselves and others. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in school life. They receive support in lessons to allow them to learn the same wide curriculum as their peers. Skilled adults help pupils with SEND to develop independence and confidence.

Pupils learn well. Leaders have designed a curriculum that clearly lays out the knowledge pupils need to know and understand, and the order they will learn it. In subjects such as mathematics and physical education (PE), teachers know the important knowledge and skills pupils need to securely know before they move on to new learning.

Pupils become fluent, accurate and confident readers. The youngest pupils are taught to read well. Adults are determined that every pupil will learn to read well – and most do. Those who need further help with reading receive effective support. Older pupils enjoy reading. The effective use of 'reading passports' helps them to choose high quality stories. Pupils develop a broad experience of many different types of texts.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons. Teachers can focus their attention on teaching the curriculum. Teachers carefully and accurately explain concepts to pupils. They provide pupils with activities to help them apply their new knowledge, along with activities to help recap and revise what they know. Pupils remember much of what they are taught.

Children in Nursery and Reception classes learn in a caring environment. Adults provide appropriate activities to help children improve their understanding of words and numbers. Children work together well. Their social and emotional needs are met well.

Leaders have not designed the curriculum in the early years with the same level of ambition and detail as in the rest of the school. Teachers are not clear on the exact knowledge children need to know in some subject areas. Children do not leave Reception as well prepared to begin to learn in Year 1 in some subjects.

Pupils have many opportunities to broaden their cultural experiences. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, they all have had the chance to take part in activities such as volunteering in the local community, visiting a major sporting stadium and performing in a play. This means pupils can see and experience the world beyond the school gate.

Older pupils are proud of their roles as house captains and being members of the school council. They play an active part in school life.

Staff are proud to work at The Orchard Primary School. Senior leaders look after staff well. They think carefully about staff's workload before making changes. Staff are provided with high quality training so they continue to improve their practice.

The academy governing board carry out their roles with great care. They make regular visits to see for themselves how well the school is doing. The trust provides effective support. They have an accurate view of what is going well and what needs to improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults are highly vigilant in looking out for signs that a pupil may need help. They know how to inform leaders of their concerns. Pupils who need additional help receive the support they need. Adults are alert to the risks pupils face, especially when online. Pupils are taught well how to stay safe when using the internet and mobile devices.

Governors have a detailed oversight of the school's work to keep pupils safe. They do not just accept what leaders tell them at face value. They visit and make checks to assure themselves all is being done to protect pupils from harm.

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

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

- In some areas of learning in the early years, leaders have not designed the curriculum to lay out the important subject knowledge that all children should know by the time they leave Reception. Leaders should ensure that they design the curriculum in Nursery and Reception to be as ambitious as the curriculum in the rest of the school. This is so children are well prepared to learn the national curriculum in Year 1.

## **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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, The Orchard Primary School, to be good in May 2011.

## **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>	145352
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227567
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	471
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Patrick McAteer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Sutton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.orchard.herts.sch.uk">www.orchard.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in February 2018 as part of the Agora Learning Partnership (the trust).

## 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 his evaluation of the school
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector met 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 samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector evaluated the curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about several other subjects.

- The inspector held meetings with the deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of trustees and members of the academy governing board.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record, reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils.
- The inspector considered the 86 responses and free-text comments to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, along with the 38 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and 108 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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