# Inspection of a good school: Perryfields Infant School

Lawn Lane, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7PP

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

## Outcome

Perryfields Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Perryfields Infant School are cheerful and welcoming. Pupils know their teachers expect the best for them, and so pupils typically listen carefully and work hard. Pupils remember lots of what they learn because their teachers usually provide clear instructions. Therefore, pupils are veritable storehouses of information on topics like doubling and halving, different family structures and staying safe online.

In their three years at the school, pupils experience many memorable events. These complement the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. They include meeting authors, a trip to the seaside and visiting a local care home to sing Christmas carols. Recently, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the circus visiting school to commemorate 50 years since their school was built. Pupils were very grateful to their parents and school staff for arranging it.

Pupils behave wonderfully. They particularly enjoy opportunities to lend a helping hand. The 'hall helpers' keep the dining hall tidy. They teach younger pupils to use polite table manners. Meanwhile, the 'play leaders' encourage pupils to take part in different activities on the playground. Given that pupils treat others kindly, bullying is rare. Pupils trust staff to stop it if it occurs. Therefore, pupils feel happy and safe in their school.

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

Many pupils achieve well in reading. Teachers' correct pronunciation helps pupils learn the sounds letters make. Teachers select high-quality storybooks to expand pupils' vocabulary and complement the topic-based learning. Teachers aim to challenge themselves and their pupils in reading. Still, there is a misunderstanding about how to help the weakest readers read fluently. Some pupils receive books containing sounds they do not know. These pupils then read very slowly, making it hard for them to understand the text. Leaders have plans to address this, but they have yet to take effect.

Elsewhere, leaders have created a carefully structured curriculum. Teachers introduce concepts in a sensible order. They carefully model how to do activities, so pupils

understand how to be successful. For example, in computing, Year 1 pupils learn how to use the tools in an application over time. Then, they produce a final piece of digital art, using all the different tools. As a result, teachers' 'proof of progress' tasks show pupils typically achieving the curriculum aims.

Children in the early years quickly slot into school life. Staff use a careful transition to build positive, supportive relationships that help children feel ready to learn. Teachers plan activities that closely match what children know and can do. As a result, children feel confident to 'have a go' and use resources as intended. For example, many children practise their number recognition and counting to prepare them for mathematics lessons in Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive suitable support. Leaders use coaching to upskill staff to identify and put in place adjustments that help pupils progress well. Leaders and staff continually look for ways to strengthen provision. Staff liaise with parents to ensure the support in place works well in school and at home. When needed, leaders contact external agencies who may provide further support for pupils.

The simple approach to the rules means staff and pupils understand leaders' expectations. Teachers use much positive praise to create a happy, safe environment. Pupils feel encouraged by the systems of stickers and certificates they receive for being kind and working hard. They particularly like working as a class to collect 'reading points' so they may win the coveted treasure chest. It is brimming with fiction and nonfiction texts for them to enjoy. If a pupil needs extra help to behave, leaders put in place workable plans. These help staff know what to do to help the pupil manage their feelings better.

How leaders and their staff cater for pupils' wider development works well. Through the physical education and personal, social and health education programmes, pupils learn to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils keenly take part in inter-school sports competitions, including cross-country, gymnastics and rugby. They perform well due to staff's encouragement and guidance. Staff also teach pupils age-appropriate content about differences among people and families. Pupils are very measured when they talk about these, showing themselves to be kind and respectful.

Local governors and school leaders work well together. They weigh up their own and others' ideas about how to make the curriculum and school systems even better, taking appropriate action to further improve the school. Staff appreciate leaders' hard work and care. It means staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors' expertise means they check systems carefully, including the checks on adults working or volunteering in the school. Leaders ensure they and their staff are well trained to spot pupils at risk of harm. Staff know how reporting concerns helps build a bigger picture that indicates to leaders a need to arrange swift support for vulnerable pupils.

Pupils learn age-appropriate content about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know that if they see or hear something online that gives them 'a funny feeling in their tummy', they must tell a trusted adult.

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

## (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders recognise their phonics programme could be better. Currently, a lack of regular training means teachers' actions are less effective than they could be, so some activities and books do not help the small number of weaker readers catch up as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure they and their staff receive the training and resources they need to teach a rigorous phonics programme that ensures all pupils achieve their very best in reading.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Perryfields Infant School, to be good in February 2012.

## 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.

## 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

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| **Unique reference number** | 145988 |
| **Local authority** | Essex |
| **Inspection number** | 10240361 |
| **Type of school** | Infant |
| **School category** | Academy converter |
| **Age range of pupils** | 4 to 7 |
| **Gender of pupils** | Mixed |
| **Number of pupils on the school roll** | 180 |
| **Appropriate authority** | Board of trustees |
| **Chair of trust** | Roger Blundell |
| **Headteacher** | Amanda Reid |
| **Website** | www.perryfieldsinfantschool.org.uk |
| **Date of previous inspection** | Not previously inspected |

## Information about this school

- Perryfields Infant School converted to become an academy school in July 2018, joining the Chelmsford Learning Partnership Trust. When its predecessor school, Perryfields Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- There is before- and after-school childcare run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- School leaders do not currently use alternative provision for any pupil.

## 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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years lead, the special educational needs coordinator, the chief executive officer for the trust, the director of school improvement for the trust, the chair of trust, four local governors and a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. 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 listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy designated safeguarding lead to review records. The inspector met with the human resources and finance administrator to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The inspector also spoke with the chair of trust, local governors, teachers and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school improvement plan and minutes of meetings.
- To gather pupils' views, the inspector spent time observing and speaking to pupils. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by reviewing the 25 responses and 16 free-text responses submitted to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

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| Daniel Short, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |

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