

# Inspection of a good school: Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery

Limes Avenue, Chigwell, Essex IG7 5LP

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

## Outcome

Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning at Limes Farm Infant and Nursery School. They are polite and welcoming. Pupils develop positive relationships with each other and with staff. They say that they feel safe in the school. It is a happy place to be. Many parents share this view, saying the school has a 'warm manner' and that children come home happy.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils understand these expectations and behave well around the school. There is a calm atmosphere. Pupils are rarely unkind to each other but when this happens, pupils say that staff deal with it quickly. Teachers put this right.

Through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum content, in lessons and through other activities, pupils develop their awareness of culture and diversity. Children in the early years, for example, worked on activities which celebrate Diwali. The school's recent 'diversity day' saw pupils come to school wearing clothes which celebrated their culture.

Pupils have opportunities to help others in the school. At playtimes, well-being ambassadors look after those who might need help or want someone to play with. They say it is about 'being kind'.

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

Leaders have carefully considered the knowledge that pupils need and the sequence in which this knowledge is taught. This starts with the provision in Nursery and builds over time. This ensures that children are ready for Year 1. Subject leaders give staff the subject support that they need to teach the curriculum well.

Reading is a priority in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff follow a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading. Children learn about phonics as soon as they start Reception. This builds on the learning that takes place in Nursery to develop speech

and language. Daily phonics lessons develop pupils' knowledge of sounds and letters. Teachers check pupils' phonics knowledge regularly. They use this information to put specific support in place for those pupils that need help to keep up. Most pupils, including those with SEND, get the well-targeted support that they need to read fluently. However, for a small number of pupils that have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the support in place has not been as effective in helping pupils to catch up. Where this is the case, these pupils do not have the reading skills needed to access the curriculum as well as others.

Pupils develop a love of reading. Most pupils practise the sounds that they learn at home using books that are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. Pupils select books that interest them from the school library to take home. Leaders also take pupils the short distance to the local library to help foster a love of books.

In the early years, there is a focus on developing children's language and number skills. Leaders engage children in learning by selecting activities to match their interests. Children follow established routines and expectations closely. Leaders in the early years are new to the curriculum leadership role. While support is in place, support to develop their skills in evaluating the curriculum is still evolving.

Teachers check at the start of lessons what pupils know. They recap previous learning and identify gaps in pupils' knowledge before they move on. Teachers break down learning into small steps. This helps pupils to remember what they need to know.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils with SEND can achieve. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum alongside their peers. They have clear support plans in place, which identify their specific needs. Teachers use the plans to inform their teaching to support SEND pupils to achieve well.

There is consistent use of the school's behaviour policy. Disruptive behaviour is rare. A small number of pupils do not engage with their learning as well as they could. Staff use positive language to bring these pupils back to their learning.

Leaders engage pupils in learning beyond the classroom. They ensure that pupils have access to a range of enrichment opportunities. Local trips to the park and shop, for example, build pupils' awareness of their local community. Visitors to the school build on and broaden curriculum learning, for example, in offering a storytelling workshop of Indian folktales.

Staff feel very well supported by leaders and the trust. They say that their workload is considered. Several governors are new to their role. They are supported through training and by the trust. However, governors are not fully confident about how to challenge and support leaders effectively to ensure leaders are routinely held to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take a robust approach to safeguarding. There are clear systems in place to report concerns. Leaders provide regular training and updates relating to safeguarding. Staff are alert to signs that could indicate that pupils might be at risk from harm. Leaders make systematic checks on new staff and governors. Records relating to safeguarding are well detailed and responded to in an appropriate and timely manner.

Leaders ensure that through assemblies, curriculum content and visitors to the school, pupils learn how to keep safe.

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

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

- Some pupils are not catching up with their reading fluency as quickly as they could. When this happens, they find it more difficult to access the curriculum and may fall behind. Leaders need to review the catch-up programme to ensure that the strategies in place are effective in supporting those pupils who struggle to read to catch up promptly.
- The early years leaders are new to leadership. While the curriculum provides children with a positive start to their education, leaders in the early years are yet to develop the skills they need to support them to evaluate and improve the curriculum over time. Leaders should ensure that new leaders have the time and training they need to help them to evaluate the curriculum precisely, so that children's achievement and their transition to key stage 1 continues to improve.
- Many governors are new to their roles. Although they are beginning to fulfil their duties, some are less confident than others in supporting leaders and in holding them to account for the quality of provision. Leaders should ensure that training is put in place to give all governors the skills and knowledge they need to carry out their roles effectively.

## **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 Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery to be good in May 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145991
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240376
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	168
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Lee Batson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Samantha Taylor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.limesfarminf.co.uk">www.limesfarminf.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery joined the Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust in July 2018.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

## 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 carried out deep dives into three subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. The inspector met with subject leaders and looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and met with three members of the local governing board; one joined the meeting remotely.

- The inspector spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding. The single central record was scrutinised, and safeguarding systems were evaluated.
- The inspector held meetings with staff who have responsibility for behaviour, attendance, SEND, early years and PSHE. The inspector also met with an early career teacher.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime.
- The inspector considered the 33 responses and 16 free-text responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View. He also considered the 20 responses to the online staff survey. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Wayne Jarvis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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