

Inspection of Shephalbury Park Primary School

Burydale, Broadwater, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 8AX

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Shephalbury Park is a motivating, calm and friendly place for pupils to learn in. There is a culture of learners at this school. Pupils take risks in their learning. Pupils feel safe and happy because staff are kind, caring and help them to learn.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement and personal development. Pupils want to do their best. They enjoy learning a broad range of subjects and take great pride in their achievements. Pupils have rich experiences that develop their character and help to shape their view of the world. Leaders use real-life scenarios to capture and capitalise on pupils' interests.

Pupils show tolerance and respect for others and have a strong understanding of why this is important. They learn about different communities and have meaningful discussions about their importance in modern Britain. Pupils develop independence and take on responsibilities, for example when selecting resources for a specific task in the classroom.

Pupils play happily together at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils say that bullying does not happen in their school and that they know the right ways to resolve friendship issues. Pupils have a can-do attitude to learning, listen well and respond positively to having ownership of their learning.

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

Leaders make careful choices about what pupils will learn by the time they leave the school. Leaders prioritise the teaching of phonics, reading and mathematics to ensure that pupils have the foundations for learning. However, there is a broad curriculum in place that pupils enjoy learning. Leaders' curriculum plans set out the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn in each subject in small steps. This builds from Nursery to Year 6. By the time they leave in Year 6, most pupils are well prepared for learning in secondary school.

Teachers make skilful adaptations to the curriculum to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use information about the individual needs of pupils with SEND to provide any extra help that is needed. This enables pupils with SEND to access the same broad curriculum as their classmates. Most pupils with SEND make strong progress in their learning.

Teachers check routinely what pupils know and can remember. However, in a few subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply what they have been taught. As a result, pupils are less secure with some skills and knowledge needed for later learning in these subjects. In the early years, adults sometimes plan activities that do not focus precisely enough on what they want children to learn. When this is the case, children find it hard to make connections with what they have learned previously, and struggle to remember and use important knowledge.

Pupils behave calmly in all areas of the school. They take responsibility for their behaviour and actions. During lessons, pupils are attentive and focused on their learning. From Nursery, pupils learn about the 'Shephalbury learner' and about what makes a good learner. Pupils say you learn most when you challenge yourself and go out of your comfort zone. Pupils learn and use strategies to manage their own behaviour particularly well. They show excellent attitudes to learning. No learning time is lost due to even minor off-task behaviour. Pupils speak proudly about their school and how they share and celebrate success.

Pupils across the school learn about diversity, inclusion, and British values. External visitors and mock elections for the school council support pupils' understanding of values such as democracy. There are a range of pupil leadership roles. Pupils develop a strong understanding of how they can contribute to their community. Leaders provide high-quality pastoral support, based on an exceptionally strong understanding of pupils' and families' needs.

Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the school's three mental health characters, 'Phil Good', 'Will Being' and 'Bea Happy'. These help pupils to learn about emotions and how to stay mentally and physically healthy. Pupils ask for help when they need it. There is a 'Phil Good' question of the week that pupils respond to. These questions include 'How to stay safe on Halloween?' and 'How can we save money in our home?'

Leaders focus on upskilling staff to be leaders. Staff work collaboratively and seek support from colleagues to develop good practice. Leaders' checks on curriculum areas do not always focus on progression of knowledge and skills from Nursery to Year 6.

Governors are knowledgeable. They work in partnership with school leaders to challenge and develop school priorities. Leaders are clear about what could be even better, and work together to make it happen.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding in the school. Regular training ensures that staff are aware of contextual risks to pupils. Staff spot concerns. They know how and to whom to pass their concerns on. School leaders ensure that pupils and their families get support quickly, through a range of agencies, to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that they have strong relationships with families and know what support they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in real life. Pupils talk about the school's 'big question' approach, where they have gained this knowledge.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years, adults do not always plan activities that focus precisely on what they intend children to learn. Children sometimes miss out on key learning, fail to make connections with previous learning and struggle to remember what they have learned. Leaders should ensure that all planned activities in the early years are focused clearly on the intended learning and help children to remember more.
- In some subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils have the opportunity to practise and apply what they have been taught. Pupils have gaps in knowledge and skills. Leaders must check more rigorously that teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and apply using their knowledge in all subjects to ensure that pupils' learning is secure across the full curriculum.

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

Unique reference number	135084
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10241544
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cameron Smith
Headteacher	Ben Conway
Website	www.shephalburypark.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Several members of the governing board have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, religious education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the design of the curriculum, spoke with subject leaders, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' books or listened to children reading and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with the local authority improvement partner.
- To inspect safeguarding, meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also reviewed records, policies and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with governors and the leaders responsible for SEND and early years provision.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors observed and spoke with pupils, including at breaktimes, and took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views.
- Inspectors reviewed the 57 responses and the 57 free-text comments submitted to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers.
- The inspectors took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Lucie Calow

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