

Inspection of a good school: The Ferrars Academy

Macaulay Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 0LL

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 December 2022

Outcome

The Ferrars Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to say they believe in themselves. They relish the opportunities available to take responsibility around the school. They are enthusiastic eco warriors and play leaders. Older pupils help younger children learning to read. School council members meet regularly and have improved the play equipment available.

In lessons, pupils are eager to respond to the high expectations of their teachers. They listen carefully to their teachers and other adults. From Nursery, children learn ambitious new vocabulary. As they move through the school, pupils use these words with increasing independence.

Pupils know it is 'important to be nice to everyone'. They spontaneously applaud and encourage each other in lessons. Pupils feel safe in the care of their teachers and peers. Bullying happens rarely, and pupils are confident that teachers stop it quickly.

Pupils learn to be caring citizens. For example, they perform for local residents at 'Time For Tea' and share books over the phone in 'Silver Stories'. Pupils learn about the local area. They visit special places locally, such as places of worship, and learn about Luton Carnival. Pupils also explore the world beyond Luton, such as on a recent visit to the Royal Opera House.

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

Leaders have put in place curriculum plans that clearly set out what they intend pupils to learn. Leaders' plans have been carefully thought through, so that learning develops in small steps. Leaders have considered the needs of pupils and identified how to meet them. In most subjects, teachers teach these plans well. They recap and build on pupils' previous learning in lessons. Teachers introduce new vocabulary clearly. They regularly check pupils' understanding. Teachers explain again when they need to or provide extra practice for pupils who need it. In a few subjects, teachers are still developing the expertise they need to teach leaders' curriculum plans effectively. Teachers occasionally

deviate from the planned learning. When this happens, pupils develop misconceptions that are not immediately checked and corrected.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. In Nursery, children learn to identify the sounds in words. This prepares them well for phonics. In Reception, children learn sounds and words so they can quickly begin to read. Leaders have invested in resources so that all pupils have books that enable them to practise their reading regularly. Adults check how well pupils are reading and put in place extra help for those who are falling behind. Most pupils learn to read confidently and well. They talk excitedly about their favourite books and say they love to read.

Pupils behave well. Teachers are quick to refocus and encourage anyone whose attention is waning. In Nursery, adults help children to learn to listen, to take turns and to share. This continues in Reception and across the school. Pupils work sensibly together on tasks. They are confident to ask if they do not understand. At breaktimes and during outdoor learning, this sensible behaviour continues. Adults encourage pupils to include others in their imaginative play and to share equipment. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of others. Bullying is rare. As a result of the positive attitudes and sensible behaviour, everyone can get on with their learning. Pupils appreciate their teachers' kindness and willingness to help.

Relationships between adults and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are strong and caring. Adults know the pupils and their preferences well. In lessons, additional adults help pupils with SEND to join in with the learning. Adults explain things clearly. When necessary, they use extra equipment to help to make new ideas more easily understood. Teachers check understanding and regularly review the progress that pupils with SEND make. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve the specific targets that have been set for them. Pupils with the highest levels of SEND are supported well. Leaders seek out and follow advice from a range of external professionals. Training enables adults to put in place carefully planned, personalised support.

Staff are proud to be part of the 'Ferrars family'. They feel that leaders take into account and support their well-being. Governors and trustees know the school well. They undertake their statutory responsibilities thoroughly. They are using the strengths in their team to ensure that the school continues to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Well-trained adults know their pupils well. They are vigilant for any signs that pupils may be at risk or have been harmed. They report their concerns straightaway. Leaders check records and follow up on all concerns. They work with a range of external agencies to get pupils and their families the help they need. They are timely and persistent in securing this help.

Leaders recognise the importance of ensuring all adults in school can keep pupils safe. They undertake appropriate checks when appointing new staff and seek appropriate advice when needed. Governors ensure that school processes are followed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have clear curriculum plans in place. A few staff are still developing the necessary expertise to teach these plans well. As a result, in some classes, pupils do not consistently acquire the knowledge that leaders intend. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the subject expertise they need to teach the planned curriculum effectively so that all pupils achieve well.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 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.

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	139612
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10255172
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karisha Moodie
Headteacher	Sarah Green
Website	www.theferrarsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average infant school, with a nursery.
- Leaders do not currently use any off-site providers of alternative education.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and the governing body, including the chair of governors and trustees.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and other staff to discuss safeguarding.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including the school development plan and safeguarding records.
- The inspector considered the 56 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 27 free-text comments. She also considered 39 responses to the staff survey and 67 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. She also observed the behaviour of pupils at breaktime and around the school.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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