

Inspection of a good school: London Colney Primary & Nursery School

Alexander Road, London Colney, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 1JG

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 March 2023

Outcome

London Colney Primary & Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this friendly, inclusive school. They feel safe here. They have warm, respectful relationships with each other and with the adults who help them. This is a thriving and diverse community. Pupils are helped to overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

Behaviour at the school is extremely positive. Pupils play happily across year groups in the playground. They support each other to meet the adults' high expectations. In lessons, pupils try their best. They strive to earn badges for demonstrating values such as curiosity, bravery and respect. Pupils know what bullying is. They are confident that the adults will deal with it on the rare occasions it arises.

The programme of wider development at the school is exceptional. Pupils have a say in the range of extracurricular clubs on offer. They develop skills and talents in activities such as crochet, journalism, mindfulness, football and gymnastics. Pupils take on numerous special responsibilities. Year 3 hosts serve lunch to their peers in the dining room, model good behaviour and keep the room tidy. Year 5 peer tutors help younger children learn to read. All pupils know that leaders listen to their ideas through the members of the London Colney Parliament.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. It is guided by the needs of the pupils. Some pupils join the school with low starting points, and for many, English is an additional language. Leaders ensure that the curriculum allows pupils to learn from their own experiences initially. In geography, for example, pupils move 'from the personal to the global', building their learning over time.

Teachers are supported to deliver the curriculum effectively. They have strong subject knowledge. Teachers use a range of methods to check pupils' understanding. These inform future teaching and plans. Occasionally, the way in which teachers present the

learning is not matched carefully enough to the needs of their pupils or leaders' preferred approaches. This means that some pupils struggle to answer questions. They may not be able to apply what they have learned independently.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified as early as possible. Leaders ensure that the right support is in place for them. Most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. All achieve well in relation to their starting points. Leaders are keen to ensure that these pupils take part in all aspects of school life.

Reading is a priority. Leaders have embedded a culture that promotes a love of reading. Pupils are keen readers and know the importance of daily practice. Children start to learn early reading skills through sound recognition in Nursery. This continues throughout Reception and key stage 1. Pupils gradually build up their knowledge of the sounds they need to know to be able to read fluently. The books they take home are carefully matched to their reading level. Any pupils who struggle to keep up are supported through additional daily practice with a skilled adult.

Pupils' attitudes towards learning are positive. Learning time is rarely lost through poor behaviour. Most pupils achieve well across all subjects. Those who find the learning tricky are quickly identified, and support is provided for them. Pupils are keen to share their learning. They remember it well. They take pride in their work, and this is generally of a high standard. However, teachers' expectations of writing are not the same across all subjects. The quality of pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammar in their English books is higher than it is in subjects such as geography and history.

The school's curriculum starts in early years. Children in Nursery and Reception settle into the routines and expectations of school quickly. They learn the language, skills and knowledge they will need to build on in key stage 1. Language and communication skills are a priority from the moment children start school. Subject-specific vocabulary is taught throughout the school.

Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and positive relationships through the wider curriculum. They have a well-developed understanding of other cultures and different faiths. Pupils understand fundamental British values and demonstrate these in their daily activities. They celebrate each other's successes and inspire each other to aim high. Pupils with musical talents showcase these, for example by playing an instrument in the weekly achievement assembly.

Leaders are determined that every pupil will get the chance to succeed. They work continuously to improve the school. They are supported in their ambitious vision by a group of committed and knowledgeable governors. Staff are proud to work at the school and they appreciate leaders' efforts to manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are extremely vigilant around safeguarding. They have created a culture in which pupil safety is the top priority, and no concern is too small to be reported. All staff are trained to recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk. They know how to report a concern. Leaders act swiftly on concerns raised. They liaise with external agencies where necessary and ensure that support is in place for vulnerable pupils and families.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes online safety. They know that they should tell an adult straightaway if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' pedagogical approaches do not always closely match the needs of the pupils they teach. When this happens, some pupils struggle to answer questions or complete the tasks set. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are supported to refine their knowledge of how best to teach each subject, so that tasks match pupils' needs more closely, enabling them to achieve their best.
- The standard of pupils' presentation, punctuation and grammar in their English books is higher than the standard of their work in other subjects. Pupils do not always remember to apply what they have learned and they make mistakes, sometimes repeatedly. Leaders should ensure that staff's expectations for recorded work are consistently high across all subjects, and that errors and misconceptions are addressed, so that pupils achieve as well as they can.

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 September 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	117146
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255229
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Theresa Clements
Headteacher	Sarah Joyce
Website	www.londoncolney.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, school leaders were not making use of any alternative provision.
- The school offers a before-school childcare provision, which is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.

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 early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, she 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 their work. The inspector listened to a sample of pupils reading to a familiar adult. She also looked at examples of curriculum plans for history and samples of pupils' work in history and English.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL to review records. She scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. She also spoke to governors, staff, pupils, and parents and carers.
- The inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan, external reviews of the school and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector met a representative of the local authority to discuss its work with the school.
- The inspector spoke to pupils from different year groups during lessons and at lunchtime. There were 45 responses to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire.
- To gather parents’ views, the inspector reviewed the 32 responses and 19 free-text comments submitted to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector gathered the views of staff by speaking with several of them and reviewing the 19 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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