

Inspection of a good school: Longwood Primary Academy

Paringdon Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 7RQ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

Longwood Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children get a great start to their educational journey at Longwood Primary. Pupils enjoy attending such a warm, welcoming and inclusive school. Pupils feel safe. They have trusting relationships with staff and know that they can share concerns if the need arises. There is little bullying. Pupils treat each other with respect. They behave well around the school because they are expected to do so.

There is a harmonious atmosphere at the school. Early on, children learn how to be courteous. Good manners are commonplace. Pupils ask visitors how they are, hold doors open and make sure they are looked after. Pupils enjoy each other's company at breakfast club.

The rich curriculum which pupils study includes important life skills. They learn how to be independent, for example by learning how to navigate the London Underground, or how to grow their own vegetables. Pupils have a wide variety of opportunities that they may not ordinarily experience in their lives. Many look forward to the residentials and camping under the stars. Pupils also appreciate their leadership roles where they can be a pupil advocate or a member of the school council.

Parents are highly positive about the school's provision. Many commented that staff have the 'best interests of children at heart'.

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

Trust leaders took swift action to stabilise staffing after the departure of key staff, including from the senior leadership team. They redeployed staff from across the trust. New staff are confident to deliver the curriculum because of regular trust training and support.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that covers the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember in each subject. They also ensure that

teachers consider the school's context in their planning. When teaching habitats in science, for example, teachers ensure that pupils get outdoors to enjoy nature. Many pupils did not have access to this opportunity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders ensure that pupils develop a rich vocabulary over time. Staff use language precisely in their teaching so that pupils have good examples to copy. Pupils explain their learning confidently because they are supported by staff with good subject knowledge. In the early years, adults show children how to ask and reply to questions clearly, as well as how to interact socially. In mathematics, children in the early years practise counting regularly. They learn that numbers can be made in different ways and use mathematical language such as 'less than' and 'more than' readily. This knowledge supports future learning for pupils in Year 1 as they solve number problems and categorise with increasing confidence.

Early reading is a strength in the school. A focus on listening to sounds and rhymes begins in the Nursery. This equips children to begin learning the phonics programme when they start in Reception. Staff teach this programme effectively. Children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 learn to read quickly and with confidence. Books are closely matched to the sounds that they know. A few pupils require extra help. When it is needed, these pupils have bespoke sessions which precisely target their areas to improve. Older pupils value and enjoy reading. They read widely and often.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff and specialist teams from across the trust. Staff receive regular training, so they understand how best to teach pupils with complex needs. Staff plan regularly together, thinking carefully about how these pupils will access the curriculum. Some pupils who have education, health and care plans benefit from personalised curriculums which help them to develop areas such as speech, language and communication.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff are clear in their expectations and use the behaviour policy consistently. Lunch and breaktimes are well organised. Pupils enjoy the play equipment and fitness games supported by the sports coaches. These activities help pupils' readiness for learning when they go back to lessons.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is strong. The life skills programme helps pupils learn how to look after themselves, as well as how to be a good citizen. Leaders want pupils to have a wide experience of life outside their local community. Pupils have many opportunities to learn and celebrate what it means to grow up in modern Britain. This includes cultural experiences such as going to the theatre.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths. However, school improvement planning is not as sharp as it could be. Some school priorities and actions do not give leaders specific guidance. Senior leaders' planned checks on the quality of provision lack sufficient focus on the school improvement priorities. This limits leaders' ability to evaluate the impact of their actions.

Staff are proud to work at the school and feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. They receive regular, helpful training that allows them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm quickly. Staff report concerns in a timely manner. Record-keeping is thorough. Leaders promptly seek help and secure the right support from external agencies for families who need it. They undertake the necessary checks when they appoint staff.

Pupils' emotional well-being is a priority. They are encouraged to say how they are feeling and to share concerns with trusted adults. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when they are online, through the curriculum and in assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- School improvement planning is not as sharp as it could be. Some school priorities and actions do not give leaders specific guidance on what the issues are and how to address them. Senior leaders' monitoring activities are generic and not sufficiently focused on the school improvement priorities. This hampers leaders' ability to check what is working well and what is not. Leaders should refine their monitoring processes so that school improvement priorities are sharper with clearer actions to achieve these.

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 November 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	141379
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10268620
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Shephard
Headteacher	Monica Holland
Website	www.netacademies.net/longwood
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2022. Several senior leaders are also new to their roles.
- The trust has delegated some responsibilities for oversight of the school to a local governing body.
- The Nursery class has two sessions: a morning and an afternoon session.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer, the chair of the local governing body, members of the local governing body, trust leaders, the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff and pupils about the school's provision.

- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in and around the school.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a selection of pupils reading to adults.
- The inspector considered the provision for early mathematics, computing and Spanish.
- The school's information on behaviour and bullying was reviewed. The inspector also reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with governors, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. She also considered the responses to the Ofsted survey for school staff. There were no responses for the Ofsted survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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