

Inspection of a good school: Water Lane Primary Academy

Broadley Road, Harlow, Essex CM19 5RD

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

Water Lane Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at school. They find it easy to make friends. They know who to report concerns to if they have worries. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, pupils trust leaders will sort it out.

Pupils behave well in class. They take turns and show courtesy towards each other. Teachers have high expectations for all pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils can get on with their learning. Staff and pupil relationships are warm. Pupils understand leaders' rewards and sanctions. Staff apply these consistently across the school.

Pupils enjoy a range of extra activities linked to the curriculum. Leaders ensure all pupils can take part in these enrichment opportunities. Many pupils take part in after school clubs. Pupils take part in links with the local community, such as a sculpture project in the town.

Pupils know that the school's values help them become better citizens. They take the meaning of values seriously by living the value in their life. They know these values make the school a nicer place. Pupils are polite and well-mannered towards visitors.

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

Leaders work hard to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. They have worked with the trust to develop the school's ambitious curriculum. Curriculum leaders have identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn. This starts in the early years where activities are designed to support children's development as independent learners. Adults ask meaningful questions about children's learning. They encourage children to explore all the activities in the setting. Pupils talk confidently about their love of learning. Teachers use a variety of techniques to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects.

Curriculum leaders know their subject well. They receive regular support and training from the trust to help them lead their subjects. They know if pupils are on track. They plan staff training and development based on identified next steps.

In response to published data, leaders introduced a new phonics programme. There is a precise and consistent approach to teaching phonics across the school. Lessons build phonics knowledge. Pupils start learning to read as soon as they join Reception. Pupils' books are matched to their phonics knowledge. Staff listen to pupils read regularly and check pupils' progress. Where pupils are falling behind, high-quality support is swiftly put into place. This ensures their reading gets back on track. Leaders have provided phonics information sessions for parents. This enables parents to support their child's reading at home. All staff have benefited from regular, ongoing training. Reading is celebrated across the school through activities such as 'take one author'.

Leaders have developed an environment where all pupils' social and emotional development is a priority. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class and live up to these expectations. Pupils know the school's rules. There are strong relationships between pupils and adults in school.

Leaders have planned additional activities to support pupils' wider development. They are passionate about developing pupils as citizens for the future. Pupils are enthusiastic about these extra opportunities. They cannot wait to sleep out under the stars or ride a large animal. Leaders ensure all pupils have access to these activities.

Leaders ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers adjust lessons to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND learn and achieve well alongside their peers.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and next steps. They act when provision needs to change. Staff feel valued by leaders. They know there is help to support their well-being. Teachers feel leaders support their workload. They welcome the regular training and development opportunities on offer to them.

Governors provide effective support and challenge for leaders. They check on the headteacher's well-being. They know what is working well in the school and the next steps. The trust checks that improvement plans are appropriate and realistic. Most parents and carers are very positive about their child's school experience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders know pupils and their families well. They act quickly to ensure pupils get the support they need. Leaders have systems in place to ensure pupils stay safe online.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. As a result, they know how to identify and report concerns. Leaders seek support from external agencies. Leaders complete all pre-

employment checks required before staff start working at the school. These checks are recorded accurately.

The trust and governors make regular safeguarding checks to support the work of leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Prior learning, including important vocabulary, is not routinely checked in every lesson. This means pupils do not always have the knowledge they need to access new learning. Leaders need to ensure there are systems in place for checking gaps in learning to ensure these are addressed in all lessons.

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 June 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	141194
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10255195
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barbara Duff
Headteacher	James Kenyon
Website	www.waterlaneprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Water Lane Primary School is part of REAch2 Academy Trust, which consists of 60 primary schools.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum lead and special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 pupils' work.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including pre-employment checks on staff. A meeting was held with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times of the day.
- A meeting was held with two of the school's governors. A separate meeting was held with a member of the trust.
- The inspector took account of responses to surveys, including Ofsted Parent View, the online survey for parents, the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lisa Massey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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