

Inspection of a good school: Laygate Community School

Laygate Lane, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE33 4JJ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2023

Outcome

Laygate Community School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at Laygate emphasise that this is a community school where all families are welcome. Pupils of many different nationalities support one another in their learning. During this inspection, one pupil commented, 'Whenever there is a new person, it is like they have always been here, as we all make friends really quickly.' Many other pupils shared similar views.

Leaders are passionate that all pupils have the best possible start to their education. Staff know pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They adapt their teaching to meet pupils' individual needs.

The school is a calm place where pupils are well behaved. Pupils follow the clear behaviour routines and live up to the high expectations set by their teachers. Pupils report that bullying rarely happens and if it did, adults would deal with it.

In early years, the high level of interaction between staff and children encourages their confidence. Children eagerly take part in forest school sessions. These activities help them to develop social skills while they are exploring nature.

Pupils are proud of the responsibilities they have and that they make a difference for the benefit of others. For example, the school council members were involved in creating new play areas, which all now enjoy.

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

A significant number of pupils attending Laygate have moved to the school part-way through their education. Many are learning English for the first time. An increasing number of pupils have complex SEND. Staff are highly skilled in crafting relationships with new pupils. Bilingual staff help new pupils and families by giving them the information that they need. Teachers check what pupils know and tailor lessons to support them.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Teachers adapt learning activities by using visual prompts and breaking up lessons into small, manageable steps.

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum. The curriculum design includes repetition of specific content across the year. In mathematics, for example, pupils add to their knowledge of fractions on a termly basis. Leaders draw on the opportunities available locally. Staff use the nearby Metro railway to take pupils to museums and places of interest. This broadens pupils' experience and helps makes their learning more memorable. As a result, pupils can recall their learning well. Leaders are still developing some subjects, such as art and design. In these subjects, the delivery of the curriculum is less consistent. As a result, some pupils do not have the chance to learn and think more deeply about art.

Leaders ensure that staff members are well trained in the highly structured phonics programme. Staff are adept at checking pupils' learning and identifying their next steps. Some pupils have extra phonics sessions to boost their confidence. Throughout school, teachers encourage pupils to a read a wide variety of texts. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and choosing books.

In early years, there is a particular focus on developing language and communication skills. Staff model the rich language they expect pupils to know. There are a variety of specialist programmes in place. For example, trained staff deliver speech therapy sessions. Children in the early years visibly enjoy being in the outdoor environment. Here, they access a wide selection of purposeful learning activities.

Leaders promote several initiatives to encourage attendance at school. These include the use of a 'Classopoly Board', where two classes with the best attendance receive weekly class rewards. Leaders check on the well-being of those who are absent from school. This includes making home visits. Attendance is improving since the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They understand the school behaviour system and are keen to earn house points. This includes the children in Reception Class, who know which house they belong to.

Personal, social and health education lessons contribute to the respect that pupils show for each other. Pupils learn about racism and the danger of stereotyping individuals. There is a strong emphasis on mental health and well-being. Pupils have specific workshops, organised by the Healthy Minds team. They also have time to relax during activities such as yoga. Leaders encourage pupils to be environmentally aware. Every class has taken part in local litter picks.

Senior leaders ensure there are many opportunities for staff training. This includes supporting teaching assistants through the higher-level award and teaching qualifications. Subject leaders are confident and knowledgeable. They are provided with time to visit classes and review how their subjects are delivered. Subject leaders offer feedback and guidance to colleagues. There is a passion for continuous improvement. Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses and offer effective challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about traffic safety through specific lessons on crossing roads. In Year 5, this knowledge is extended through 'Bikeability' training. The local community police officer delivers sessions on keeping safe. This includes the risks associated with Bonfire Night.

Staff are vigilant in identifying pupils who may be at risk of harm. There are clear procedures in place to report any concerns to the safeguarding lead. Leaders make appropriate referrals to social services and partner agencies. These are based on legitimate concerns. Leaders support families through some difficult and challenging times.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have implemented an ambitious curriculum. However, in some subjects, such as art and design, the guidance for teachers is less detailed. This means there are some inconsistencies in the curriculum delivery. As a result, some pupils learn less than others. Leaders should ensure that the level of detail in the curriculum plans for all subjects provides teachers with clear guidance on what pupils are expected to learn.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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	108672
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10255882
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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Judith Ward
Headteacher	Michelle Lauder
Website	www.laygatecommunityschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one alternative education provider.
- A breakfast club is operated by the school.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with early career teachers and some support staff.
- The inspector met also with representatives of the local governing body and a senior adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson

visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at books and samples of work.

- Prior to the inspection, the inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. She spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke to staff, parents and governors. A range of safeguarding information was scrutinised, including the school's policies and records. The inspector spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector spoke to pupils and parents about their views of the school. The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were taken into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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