

Inspection of a good school: Fairhouse Community Primary School

Long Riding, Basildon, Essex SS14 1QP

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 June 2023

Outcome

Fairhouse Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time here. There is a friendly welcome for everyone. Older pupils help the younger children. There are good manners and respectful relationships between the members of the school community.

Clear rules and routines ensure that pupils behave sensibly in classes and around the school. Pupils listen politely to adults. Breaktimes are relaxed and harmonious. Pupils enjoy exploring the spacious grounds. They play games such as football or running races. Groups of pupils sit together and chat happily. 'Friendship Fridays' enable older and younger pupils to mix and play together.

Pupils are confident to share their ideas together and with their teachers. Pupils try hard with their learning. They know that their teachers expect everyone to join in and do their best.

Pupils confidently talk to adults about any worries or concerns. Bullying and unkind incidents happen sometimes but teachers always act straight away to stop them.

Pupils learn about the world around them through trips, such as to museums and the zoo. Clubs run throughout the day, starting with breakfast club, a computing club at lunchtime and sports or interest clubs after school. Pupils support charities, for example baking cakes to raise funds.

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

Leaders ensure that all pupils enjoy a wide and varied curriculum from the very start, in Reception. They have put in place a well-sequenced curriculum so that teachers are clear about what pupils need to know at every stage.

Teachers introduce new ideas clearly. They provide the equipment or extra help that pupils need to understand tricky new concepts. They give plenty of practice so pupils can

become confident with their learning. Pupils work well together. They encourage and coach each other in lessons. This helps pupils to keep up.

In most subjects, teachers check how well pupils grasp new ideas or remember previous concepts. They use this information to adapt their plans. Teachers clarify any confusion and give extra practice to secure skills. Leaders use well-thought-out assessment systems in these subjects to identify any groups of pupils who are not achieving as well as they could. They rapidly adapt the curriculum and teaching to address this. In a few subjects, assessment systems are not as well developed. In these subjects, some pupils have gaps or misconceptions in their learning over time that are not being addressed as quickly.

Leaders have invested in training and resources to ensure that the teaching of early reading is clear, systematic and effective. Books are well matched to what pupils know. Teachers check how well pupils are remembering and applying their phonic skills. They quickly spot any pupils who need revision or extra support and put this in place promptly. Most pupils learn to decode well. They move on to tackling increasingly ambitious texts. Adults provide opportunities for pupils to practice developing fluency and reading comprehension skills. The teaching of vocabulary, which helps pupils to understand what they read, is not as consistently well embedded.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get carefully planned support. This helps them to make progress in small steps from their starting points. Most pupils with SEND work alongside their peers in class. Skilful adults encourage and support them. A few pupils need a more bespoke curriculum to meet their needs. These pupils get the right help on a one-to-one or small group basis, as well as with their peers in class or at breaktimes.

Staff have high expectations for behaviour and pupils respond well. Pupils know the rules and say they are fair. A few pupils occasionally lose focus in lessons, but they do not distract others, and this is spotted quickly by teachers. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly. Leaders record, resolve and follow up any incidents of unkind behaviour.

Leaders enrich the curriculum with a range of trips and opportunities to broaden interests. Pupils learn new skills in events such as orienteering. The choir takes part in local festivals. There is a broad range of clubs for pupils to try out or develop their skills, such as cookery and gymnastics. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop as responsible citizens. They care for their school environment through gardening club. Prefects help at lunchtime and organise games for younger children. Pupils have developed links with a local care home.

Staff feel part of a team. They work well together and feel included in decisions to make improvements. They appreciate the consideration of leaders for their well-being. Trust leaders provide support for staff through network events and extra resources.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone takes safeguarding seriously. Staff are well trained to spot and record any safeguarding concerns. Leaders act quickly to secure the right help for children and their families. They are persistent in seeking help from external agencies and work with them effectively when support is in place.

Safe recruitment processes are in place and accurately recorded. Leaders follow all guidance to keep children safe.

Leaders are proactive in educating pupils about risks they face. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and out of school, for example through road safety and Bikeability.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Systems to effectively teach new vocabulary across subjects are not consistent. As a result, some pupils develop misconceptions or gaps in their word knowledge. This makes reading comprehension harder for them. Leaders should provide training for all staff so that vocabulary is taught well across the curriculum.
- In a few subjects, checks on key learning are not consistently precise or informing next steps for teachers. Where this happens, pupils can forget what they have been taught. This slows progress as pupils have less secure foundations to build new knowledge on. Leaders should ensure that effective assessment strategies are in place for all subjects to inform curriculum planning and support for pupils.

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 predecessor school, Fairhouse Community Junior School, to be good in April 2016.

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	146944
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10269247
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eileen Patching OBE
Headteacher	Kelly Hamilton
Website	www.fairhouseprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders provide a before-school breakfast club.
- Leaders use three registered alternative providers.
- Fairhouse Community Primary School converted to become an academy school in May 2019. When its predecessor school, Fairhouse Community Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

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 spoke with school leaders, including the chair of the interim executive board, a representative from the trustees, trust leaders, subject leaders, and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive the inspector spoke 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.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed records and policies and met with the designated safeguarding lead and other staff to discuss safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector considered the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 18 free-text comments. The inspector also considered the 32 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil at this school. The inspector also observed the behaviour of pupils at breaktimes and around the school.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, 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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