

Inspection of a good school: The Lea Primary School and Nursery

Moorland Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4LE

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 June 2023

Outcome

The Lea Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this school and achieve consistently well. They are enthusiastic and positive about their learning. Pupils, including those in the early years, are motivated to meet the high standards adults expect of them. They focus on their learning during lessons. Pupils are proud to earn team points and answer their 'destination questions'. They appreciate the time teachers take to make sure they fully understand what has been taught. Pupils like having regular chances to recap on what they know before learning something new. They know adults genuinely care about them and want them to succeed.

Pupils are considerate friends. Pupils play cooperatively and happily outside, enjoying many favourite games. From early years upwards, pupils understand and follow the school's rules and routines. Pupils like how everyone is treated the same. They show each other respect. Bullying is very rare. Pupils are confident adults will support them should any problems arise.

Pupils relish the different visits they go on, including a residential, going to museums and trips to London. Children in early years all learn to ride a bike. Pupils can choose from a range of extra-curricular clubs, including sports, choir and coding. They actively support community projects.

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

Leaders have an ambitious curriculum securely in place across all subjects. From Nursery upwards, leaders and teachers know precisely what knowledge pupils need to know and when to teach it. Leaders have made explicit the most important knowledge pupils need to remember before they start to learn something new. Teachers make sure that pupils frequently recall this essential learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use

this to guide all pupils, step by step, clearly, through their learning in lessons. Teachers also systematically check pupils' understanding. They only move on to new learning when pupils are secure in their knowledge and do not have any misconceptions. Pupils know how well they are doing because teachers give them immediate feedback. Teachers are quick to spot and fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Adults know pupils' needs well. They adapt activities so that all pupils can learn successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from additional, bespoke support from well-trained adults. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils demonstrate a detailed understanding of the subjects covered. Children in early years have lots of opportunities to practise what they have been taught. This helps them to learn successfully. Older pupils use their knowledge secured over time to deepen their understanding and make connections in their learning. This was evident in pupils' discussions about world religions, historical events and scientific processes. This deep learning prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils consistently achieve well in reading. Leaders keep reading as a constant priority. From early years onwards, teachers ensure that pupils know the sounds they need to read confidently and fluently for their age. Pupils regularly read books that match their reading ability. Staff continually check how secure pupils are with reading. They intervene quickly and effectively if pupils need extra help. Leaders have thought carefully about the texts pupils read. Pupils enjoy reading from a range of authors, and this broadens their vocabulary. Pupils access well-stocked and inviting class libraries.

Pupils understand how they are expected to behave in lessons. They get on with their learning. Pupils show self-control and know the right behaviour choices to make, whether they are with an adult or not. Pupils who need additional behaviour support are managed well so they can continue to learn alongside their peers. In early years, children have good levels of concentration. They listen carefully to adults and to each other.

Pupils understand how to stay safe online and how to have healthy relationships and lifestyles. They are taught to respect differences. Pupils frequently go on trips to deepen their understanding of the world beyond where they live. Pupils take an active part in school and wider community life. Fundraising projects teach them to understand the challenges within society, such as homelessness and lack of sanitation. Pupils understand democracy through elections to join the school council. There are many extra-curricular clubs offered.

Staff are highly dedicated and motivated. They are supported and valued by leaders, including governors. Leaders makes sure that staff workload is manageable. Staff enjoy working at this school. Governors provide effective oversight of the school. They hold leaders to account well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about how to manage risk, with dedicated lessons and visits from, for example, the police. Pupils all say they have trusted adults they can talk to about any worries. All adults in school know how to report concerns. Leaders ensure that staff are trained in the latest safeguarding matters. Leaders regularly check that their safeguarding systems are effective. They are prompt in dealing with concerns and pursue agencies for support. Appropriate checks are made on adults who work in school. Governors ensure they regularly review safeguarding systems.

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 December 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	117327
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288457
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	234
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Paul Goodwin
Headteacher	James Berry
Website	lea-pri.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own before-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- Currently, the school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides Nursery provision every morning. The Nursery is co-owned by a separate provider. This provider runs a childcare provision in the afternoons and after school on the school site.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, senior teachers, subject leaders, teachers and some support staff.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject

leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The lead inspector looked at a range of pupils' work from other subject areas and spoke to pupils about their work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector met representatives from the governing body and the school's improvement partner.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's own self-evaluation information and the school development plan.
- The lead inspector looked at the arrangements for safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks. The lead inspector spoke with leaders and staff about the systems and processes to support safeguarding and the school's safeguarding ethos.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 131 free-text comments. The lead inspector also considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were 12 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. During the inspection, the lead inspector spoke to many pupils across the school.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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