

Inspection of a good school: Lexden Primary School with Unit for Hearing Impaired Pupils

Trafalgar Road, Lexden, Colchester, Essex CO3 9AS

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 July 2023

Outcome

Lexden Primary School with Unit for Hearing Impaired Pupils continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to talk about, and show off, their school. They appreciate the positive relationships they have with their 'amazing' teachers. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are safe and well cared for.

From the start of early years, pupils learn and model the kindness and good behaviour leaders expect of them. Pupils follow the golden rules. They get along well during lessons and at playtimes. Pupils explain that while there may be an occasional disagreement, there is little bullying. Adults are quick to put a stop to any incidents that occur. This makes for a happy, relaxed school community.

Pupils like the topics they study. They develop curiosity and commitment in their learning. Pupils stick at tasks, even when learning gets tricky. Pupils enjoy a good story and are eager to talk about the 'special books' they have read.

Pupils like the wide range of activities leaders provide for them, such as the signing choir and numerous clubs. Pupils make enthusiastic use of the scooters, costumes and trolleys during breaktimes. They are also eager to take on responsibilities such as a class job, or escorting visitors and new pupils around their school.

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

Governors and leaders share a wholehearted commitment to inclusive education. They have thought carefully about what constitutes the right curriculum for Lexden pupils. Leaders have considered how pupils learn best, including those supported by the unit for hearing impaired pupils (UHI). Pupils, including those with SEND, study an ambitious, well-designed curriculum underpinned by the school's values.

In the majority of subjects, leaders have specified the 'sticky' knowledge that pupils should learn. Where this is the case, teachers deliver the curriculum in line with leaders' expectations. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They introduce pupils to new content in small steps. Teachers give pupils plenty of time to talk about and practise what they study. Teachers check that pupils have a firm grasp of new information. In pre- or post-tutoring sessions, skilled staff support pupils who need extra help. In most subjects, pupils, including those with SEND, remember what they study, and achieve well.

Leaders are finalising their thoughtful improvements to the curriculum. In a couple of subjects, they have not set out what they want pupils to learn year on year. In these subjects, some teachers are uncertain about what pupils should have learned in previous years. Teachers choose activities that interest and enthuse pupils, but do not securely build up pupils' subject knowledge over time. This means that teachers are not always able to accurately assess pupils' progress. So, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Staff and pupils share a love of reading. From the start of early years, stories form an important part of each day. Staff teach phonics well. They make sure pupils practise their phonic knowledge by reading books full of familiar words and sounds. Pupils choose to read more challenging stories too. Leaders ensure pupils sustain their enthusiasm for reading. Pupils like the 'reading theatres' and reading groups in which they read aloud to adults and pupils. Pupils enjoy reading stories and poems in assemblies. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers.

Leaders establish a detailed understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND, including those supported through the UHI. Leaders share this information with teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers adapt teaching to provide these pupils with the right support in their learning. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils from the UHI to learn the same curriculum as their classmates. Pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils learn plenty about different cultures and faiths. They also understand the importance of rules. Pupils recognise that the golden rules 'make school a better place to learn, to be safe and enjoy learning'. Pupils, including those supported by the UHI, become more confident and reflective the longer they remain as Lexden. Pupils work well together, share ideas and celebrate each other's achievements. They are keen to be role models to younger pupils. Pupils also learn the value of hard work. They understand that this supports them to achieve their best. Through their weekly well-being sessions, pupils appreciate the importance of relaxation and reflection. They say this readies them for the next steps of their learning.

Governors and senior leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are proud of the difference they make. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about Lexden Primary School and Unit for Hearing Impaired Pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have instilled a deep safeguarding culture. Governors are vigilant in checking that this is the case. There are robust recruitment processes in place. This includes detailed records of the checks carried out on staff working at the school.

Staff know that no concern about pupils' safety is too small to ignore. Staff understand and follow school procedures for reporting any concerns they have about a pupil's welfare. Leaders follow up on these concerns swiftly. This means that pupils and families get the support that they need.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe in different situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not finished improving the curriculum in a few subjects. They have not provided teachers with precise guidance as to what pupils should learn in these subjects. Teachers do not choose teaching activities and content that securely build pupils' progress over time. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders must give teachers training so they are well placed to teach and assess pupils' progress equally well in all subjects.

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 March 2014.

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	114707
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10288434
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Puttick
Headteacher	Alex Candler
Website	www.lexden.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Lexden Primary School runs an 18-place UHI. There are currently 14 pupils supported by the UHI.
- The school does 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. 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, other senior leaders, the lead teacher for the deaf, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector met with several groups of pupils. The inspector also observed pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector met with seven members of the local governing body, including the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector also spoke, by phone, with a representative from Essex local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. In each deep dive, the inspector spoke with leaders and teachers, looked at curriculum documentation, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at examples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke with leaders, looked at curriculum documentation and looked at pupils' work in a small number of other subjects.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks, looked at safeguarding documentation, spoke with staff, pupils and trustees, and spoke with a representative from Essex local authority.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and took into account evidence from the school's own parent surveys.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and took into account evidence from the school's own staff surveys.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023