

Inspection of a good school: Pemberley Academy

Hodings Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1NW

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 January 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Lisa Fish. This school is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Pemberley Academy. Staff and pupils are proud of their school. Adults know the pupils well. Relationships are warm and supportive. Pupils feel safe, knowing that adults will quickly help them if they are worried about anything.

The school's mission to provide 'exceptional experiences everyday' means that learning is always exciting. Pupils are inspired to participate fully in lessons. Learning in class is rarely disrupted as pupils focus intently on their studies. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve extremely well through the carefully planned curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils are determined to meet the high expectations that adults have for them in all aspects of school life. This begins in Reception, where children learn good habits to help them be successful as they progress through the school. Pupils move sensibly and responsibly around the school. Classrooms are purposeful and calm.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through the opportunities available. Trips to London and walks around the local area support pupils to understand the world around them. Pupils enjoy the large selection of clubs available, including sports, drama, well-being and yoga.

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

The school is led well. Leaders are aspirational for all pupils. The thoughtfully designed curriculum begins in Reception, where it provides strong foundations for future learning. The school has identified the precise knowledge, including the key vocabulary, pupils need to know in all subjects. Clear curriculum plans provide opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have previously learned, so that pupils build on what they already know. Teachers quickly identify if a pupil has misunderstood something so they can correct this. Consequently, pupils securely build a rich body of knowledge across the curriculum.

The school constantly evaluates the curriculum so that it keeps on improving. Pupils' work reflects adults' high expectations across the breadth of the curriculum. In geography, for example, older pupils can explain their recent learning about weather and climate and how the tilt of the earth influences the seasons. They can recall the names of countries and continents that they learned in key stage 1. This helps them 'think like a geographer' and succeed in their learning.

Reading is a priority. The school ensures that pupils read a wide range of texts by classic and modern authors. As soon as children start in Reception, they learn to read sounds and build words. This helps them become confident and fluent readers. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Adults quickly identify anyone who struggles to read. These pupils receive the support they need to catch up with their peers. Older pupils continue to develop their reading. They can explain how to explore a text to build understanding. This all helps pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors.

Adults at Pemberley Academy know and understand pupils' needs well. They use this to effectively adapt lessons to ensure pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others and therefore, gain the knowledge they need to achieve well.

Pupils attend school regularly and behave extremely well. They are kind and considerate towards each other and adults. Pupils politely welcome visitors. They are keen to tell them about their 'fantastic' school.

The school places enormous importance on pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about British values, equality and being a good citizen. Pupils gain confidence from the many leadership roles open to them. These include being prefects, school councillors and eco-leaders. Pupils know that key people from the past and from different cultures have helped shape life in the modern world. They can explain the legacy of Nelson Mandela and the work of Mary Seacole. Pupils are clear that everybody is welcome at their school.

The school's emphasis on enhancing the curriculum is commendable. Trips and visits are carefully designed to support learning across different subjects. Pupils undertake studies of Harlow's sculpture trail to enhance their appreciation of art. On visits to London, pupils map out the route in advance and study important landmarks.

Staff value the support provided by leaders. They appreciate how senior leaders help them manage their workload.

The trust maintains a clear and strategic oversight of the school. The trust holds leaders accountable for the school's provision. It balances this with high-quality support. Leaders make highly effective use of this to keep improving the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 April 2018.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140380
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295065
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	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Robert
Headteacher	Lisa Fish
Website	www.pemberleyacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Pemberley Academy is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils attending alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to some pupils read to an adult they knew.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- The lead inspector met representatives of the trust, including the deputy director of education and the trust regional safeguarding lead. The inspector also met with the chair and the vice chair of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governing body and trust meeting minutes.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. The inspector met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- The inspector took account of parents', carers', staff's and pupils' views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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