

Inspection of a good school: Fairlawn Primary School

Honor Oak Road, London SE23 3SB

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 June 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fairlawn Primary School is a place where learning and fun go hand in hand. The school is full of joy. Pupils learn the importance of study and play as two sides of the same coin. It is the seamless melding of classroom learning with playground fun that gives the school its unique ethos. Each contributes to pupils' strong achievements, and each helps to make the school a safe place where pupils want to be.

The curriculum, including the way it is designed and put into practice, is one of the school's strengths. A great deal of thought has been given to what pupils need to know, and what skills they need for secondary school and beyond. The key to the school's success is making this ambitious curriculum exciting and accessible to all pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about what they have learned and remembered.

Pupils behave especially well, in and out of classrooms. Learning is rarely, if ever, disrupted by silliness. Everyone knows how they are expected to behave, and what happens if they do something wrong. On the odd occasions when this happens, the school's approach is to help pupils understand how to regulate their behaviour. This reflects the school's values of friendship, responsibility and empathy perfectly and explains pupils' highly positive attitudes.

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

Improvements to the curriculum, and the school's unique approach to encouraging play during breaktimes and lunchtimes, have proved to be a powerful combination in securing excellence at this school. The school's distinctive ethos promotes pupils' learning most effectively. One of the ways it does this is by keeping a sharp focus on pupils' attendance. Absences are low and falling year on year.

The aspirational curriculum is based on a thorough understanding of how pupils learn. This is underpinned by using up-to-date research to refine and hone how subjects are taught. This is true, too, for the early years. Children's learning and development are carefully planned so that they are well placed for the move from Nursery to Reception, and then to Year 1.

The curriculum is carefully structured to help pupils build their knowledge and skills logically. In mathematics, for example, the work is split into small steps so that pupils build their knowledge bit by bit. Teachers check constantly whether pupils have a secure grasp of a topic, or if there are misconceptions, before moving on. They adapt lessons to make sure that everyone understands. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who are identified quickly and supported effectively. As a result, they achieve well.

Early reading is also taught most effectively. The introduction of a new phonics scheme, from the time pupils start in Reception, has helped to improve pupils' reading considerably. However, what has really made a difference is the way the scheme is used consistently across the school, including for those pupils who need extra help to catch up. As a result, pupils learn to read with increasing fluency, accuracy and enjoyment as they move through the school.

The school's focus on reading for pleasure extends pupils' interest in and enjoyment of different kinds of books. The range of initiatives and activities to support reading, for example reading ambassadors, classroom displays and visits to bookshops, all help to give reading a high priority. Curriculum thinking and guidance for staff identify the essential vocabulary that pupils need to know to become confident readers.

The systems for checking pupils' learning are effective. Formal tests are used judiciously, ensuring that staff workload is not unduly high. Nevertheless, the school has rightly identified that developing its arrangements to check learning in some of the wider curriculum subjects needs further work. For example, the school is currently looking at how best to check that pupils understand important ideas in history, not just facts.

The school's positive ethos means that pupils behave extremely well. Bullying is rare, a picture confirmed by pupils. They were clear that if it were to happen, the school would deal with it effectively through the Reflection Zone. This epitomises Fairlawn's values. Pupils are highly respectful of others, form positive relationships and are reflective learners.

Pupils' well-being and welfare are priorities. Adults work effectively to support pupils' personal and emotional well-being, especially those with SEND. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme covers a wide range of important topics. Pupils spoke confidently about keeping themselves safe online and road safety. In addition, PSHE covers issues related to physical and emotional health, such as eating healthily and forming strong relationships. Assemblies, visits to museums, whole-school events, such as international evening, and visiting speakers all add considerably to pupils' wider understanding of the world and their part in it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- As the school has identified, it needs to develop further the way it assesses pupils' learning in the foundation subjects. In particular, greater emphasis needs to be placed on checking whether pupils have a secure grasp of the 'big ideas' of the subject, not just the basic facts.

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 January 2019.

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	100710
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10323253
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon Edwards
Headteacher	Hania Ryans
Website	www.fairlawn.lewisham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Fairlawn Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It is part of a hard federation with Haseltine Primary School. The two schools share a governing body.
- The school does not use alternative 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and, where possible, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- The inspector also looked at other areas of the curriculum, including in early years.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector also met with the chair of the governing body and governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including written comments. The inspection also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey.
- 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.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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