

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Hatfield Heath Primary School

Hatfield Heath, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7EA

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

Hatfield Heath Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Elisabeth Gelston. This school is part of The Learning Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Victoria Marrow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Diane Hancock.

What is it like to attend this school?

The staff at Hatfield Heath tailor their support and education to the pupils who attend. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get all the support they need to succeed.

Pupils enjoy their time at school. They get on together and are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils say, rightly, that the school is welcoming. As one child commented, 'We are all friends.' Pupils are respectful towards each other and behave well.

The school is determined to ensure all pupils do well and have high aspirations. The school's 'Heath way' encourages hard work, equality, ambition, team spirit and heart. Pupils experience this throughout their time at the school. Whether it is classroom-based learning, creative artwork or the anticipated nativity performance, the school provides vibrant activities that really engage the pupils.

Parents and carers speak positively of the school. They appreciate the warm nurturing environment and value the care their children receive from the staff. Many parents acknowledged the efforts of the school to help support pupils and their families. Parents wholeheartedly recommend the school.

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

A positive culture of learning is established as soon as children start in early years. There

is a strong focus on developing children's communication and language from an early age. Staff model pronunciation and read to children in a way that brings stories alive. Children learn new words and have opportunities to practise them when retelling what they have learned. This helps them to develop their language successfully.

The early reading curriculum is well structured. Staff have been trained to teach phonics using a common format. Staff present sounds clearly to pupils and check pupils' command of this important area of learning well. Those pupils who are not secure in their learning are provided with appropriate support to ensure they do not fall behind. As a result, pupils develop fluency and become confident readers.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. Pupils' knowledge and skills build progressively from early years through to Year 6. In lessons, pupils gain knowledge that they share with enthusiasm. For example, in geography, they discussed the formation of mountains from tectonic movements, such as Mount Everest, and evaluated how Henry VIII impacted Britain during his reign. Pupils embrace the curriculum as it is brought to life by skilled staff.

Pupils with SEND are supported effectively. They work alongside their peers and experience the full curriculum. The school works closely with families and outside agencies to identify pupils' needs. Learning activities are adapted so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. For example, staff chunk knowledge into sections and use pictorial aids to support pupils' writing.

In some subjects, however, key vocabulary is not consistently reinforced. Pupils' understanding of this vocabulary is not routinely checked by staff. This means that some pupils repeat errors in the use and writing of these challenging words. Furthermore, some pupils do not always use more complex words as they are unsure of their meaning. This prevents them from doing as well as they could.

Attendance is a high priority for school leaders. The school works with families to ensure that all pupils attend regularly.

Pupils across the school behave well. Older pupils act as role models and look to help younger children when they can. Pupils talk with pride about the importance of heart, which is associated with kindness in the 'Heath values'. Lessons take place with little or no interruptions.

The personal development programme is a strength of the school. Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy, along with knowledge of other religions and cultures via this programme. Younger children also learn about their local environment and countries further afield. Older pupils are encouraged and supported to raise money for charities. This helps pupils understand what it means to be an active member of the community and keep themselves safe.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel supported by leaders and appreciate the training they receive to develop in their practice. Staff say that their workload and well-being are considered when leaders make decisions. Governors have a clear understanding

of the school's strengths and areas for further development. As a result, they provide an effective level of support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not have a unified view of what vocabulary pupils need to know and understand to succeed in different subjects. As a result, not all pupils can spell and use essential vocabulary, leading to repeated errors in their written work. The school should ensure that staff know what words pupils need to know and how to help them remember them so pupils are prepared for their future learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness 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	141714
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345404
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	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Diane Hancock
CEO of the trust	Victoria Marrow
Headteacher	Elisabeth Gelston
Website	www.hatfieldheath.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of The Learning Partnership Trust, which consists of three primary schools.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 curriculum was reviewed, a sample of lessons visited, teachers and pupils were spoken with about the school and learning. Pupils' work was sampled across year groups. The inspector heard pupils read when taking part in their lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with a range of leaders, including the headteacher, deputy

headteacher, special needs coordinator and attendance administrator. He also met members of the governing body and trust board and the CEO.

- The inspector met with some teaching and support staff within the school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school, their learning, behaviour and safety, including when they access outdoor learning.
- 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.
- A range of records relating to behaviour and attendance were scrutinised.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector met with groups of staff. He also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspector met with some parents at the end of the school day. He also considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and took into consideration the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Ahson Mohammed, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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