

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Magna Carta Primary Academy

St John's Road, Stansted Mountfitchet CM24 8JP

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 December 2024

Outcome

Magna Carta Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jennifer Pearce. This school is part of the BMAT Education multi-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 (CEO), Helena Mills, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Drayton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive punctually and happily at school every day, eager to get on with the business of learning. They behave extremely well in lessons and at social times. Pupils appear to find it easy to keep the school's rules of 'Be kind, be safe, work hard'. The atmosphere around the school is calm and highly conducive to learning.

The school is ambitious for all its pupils. It ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can effectively access the curriculum. Pupils embrace the varied learning opportunities the school offers them. These include building a working model of an electric car in design and technology and hunting for shapes in the environment in mathematics. Pupils rise to the school's high expectations. They achieve well across the curriculum.

Leadership roles equip pupils with important life skills, such as public speaking and decision-making. Prefects, digital leaders and sports ambassadors take part in running assemblies, organising resources or helping in lessons. These roles grow pupils' confidence and develop their character. Links with local community organisations, such as a food bank, enable pupils to become active citizens. Pupils relish the chance to perform at the annual 'Magna Carta's got talent' show.

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

The school and trust have designed an ambitious, inspiring curriculum. This aims to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need at each stage of their education and for later life. The curriculum identifies what pupils need to learn in each subject, including essential subject-specific vocabulary. It makes connections between subjects and allows pupils to apply their learning in different contexts. This supports deeper, more secure learning.

The curriculum sets out the sequence of learning so that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Typically, teachers' explanations are clear and focused on the key information pupils need to learn. This helps pupils to learn well and to use appropriate vocabulary for each subject. In the Reception class, for example, children describe the properties of 2D shapes, using 'equal', 'straight', 'curved', 'sides' and 'corners' confidently and accurately.

The school uses a range of methods to quality assure the curriculum. In lessons, teachers use questioning, quizzes and written or practical tasks effectively to assess pupils' understanding. More widely, the school gathers information to identify gaps in the curriculum or in staff expertise. It acts swiftly to address these. These checks identify pupils' needs too. The school works with parents and external professionals, including experts from the trust, to ensure pupils with SEND receive effective support that meets their needs.

The school's phonics programme develops pupils' early reading skills successfully. Well-trained staff deliver the programme with great consistency in the Reception class and Year 1. Any pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive targeted support to keep up. By the end of Year 1, the number of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics is well above the national average. Reading is a priority throughout the school. A range of high-quality, fiction and non-fiction texts underpin learning across the curriculum in all year groups.

In some subjects, the curriculum is not implemented with the same consistency. Sometimes, teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions effectively. Occasionally, learning time is not used well to move pupils on when they are ready. This means some pupils do not progress through the curriculum as well as they could.

There is a culture of aspiration throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and respectful. Adults establish clear routines and expectations as soon as children join the Reception class. These support positive behaviour for learning and play as pupils move through the school. Attendance at the school is high.

The school has carefully planned its provision for pupils' personal development. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education teaches pupils about fundamental British values, such as tolerance and the rule of law. The '1215 committee' gives its pupil members a taste of democracy in action. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe on and offline. In assemblies and lessons, pupils learn about beliefs, cultures and

experiences that are different from theirs. All of this helps pupils to navigate life beyond the school gates.

The local governing board has a firm grasp of the school's strengths and priorities. It has played an important part in helping the school to maintain its high standards. Through initiatives to reduce workload and development opportunities, the school provides staff with the support they need to carry out their roles effectively. Everyone at the school is sharply focused on achieving the best outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in the way teachers deliver the curriculum in some subjects. In some instances, they do not move pupils on to their next steps when pupils are ready to. In others, they do not address pupils' misconceptions effectively. As a result, pupils do not consistently progress through the curriculum as well as they could. The school and trust should equip staff with the knowledge and expertise they need to implement the curriculum consistently and effectively so that pupils achieve as well as possible in all subjects.

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 July 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	142771
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345425
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Drayton
CEO of the trust	Helena Mills
Headteacher	Jennifer Pearce
Website	www.magnacartaacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the BMAT Education multi-academy trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There have been changes in the school's leadership since the last inspection. The headteacher took up the post in April 2021.
- The school runs an alternative provision, called Phoenix. This provides short-term placements for up to five pupils from local schools, with social, emotional and mental health needs. Phoenix was not considered as part of this inspection because no pupils on the school's roll were attending the 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with a range of senior leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, two curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. She met with trust leaders, including the primary director of education, director of pupil welfare and director of SEND. The inspector also met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of local governing body meetings.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school site.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also reviewed the responses to the online staff survey. In addition, the inspector spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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