

Inspection of a good school: Leigh Beck Infant School and Nursery Academy

Point Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 7TD

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 March 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 head of school is Tracy Smith. The school is part of the Northwick Park Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (who is also executive headteacher), Emma Lane, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Wood.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils make excellent progress in their time at the school. As a result of high expectations and highly effective teaching, many pupils achieve very well by the time they leave. Pupils enjoy their learning. They talk with excitement about their topics and are knowledgeable about key information learned. Pupils quickly learn to read because of the clear and targeted phonics teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well to make strong progress and achieve exceptionally well.

This is a happy school. Pupils learn clear routines and expectations right from the start. Consequently, behaviour is excellent. Pupils support each other at playtimes by being 'well-being warriors'. They have lots of opportunities to practise early democracy by voting in class, for example what book to read next, and for roles such as the school council.

Pupils have many experiences that enhance their education further. Pupils talked with awe about their recent 'space dome' experience. They enjoy the many trips, including regularly competing against other schools in sports. There are a wide range of interesting clubs, including those for art, sports, and creative writing.

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

The school has a well-planned curriculum. Pupils experience new learning in carefully sequenced steps. The school has trained staff well to teach the different aspects of the curriculum. As a result, lessons are clear and engaging. The activities that pupils complete help them practise key skills and make strong progress over time.

The school has a high focus on vocabulary and speaking. Many pupils start with undeveloped speech and language skills. Staff listen skilfully to what pupils say and model it back to them using the correct language. In the early years, staff introduce new words into children's play and demonstrate how to use them as they play alongside them. The school also ensures children learn the right pencil grip and seated posture at a table to get writing off to a strong start.

The teaching of early reading is excellent. The school has ensured that the chosen approach is used with a high level of consistency. Staff ensure pupils practise the precise sounds and words they need to move on. Pupils take part in a wide range of other group and individual practice to improve sound and word recognition. All these result in pupils learning to read fluently and with good understanding. Pupils get additional help if needed, so virtually all become strong readers. Pupils are enthusiastic about books and stories.

The school ensures that each pupil is challenged or supported appropriately. There is a high focus on pupils regularly practising key skills to develop fluency, for example when learning number bonds or writing sentences in the early years. Pupils with SEND have excellent and personalised adaptations made to learning, and as a result do well. The school has ensured that where there are pupils with greater needs, the staff who support them are trained to deliver individualised programmes.

The school chooses to make extensive use of drama, role play and discussion. This is effective at engaging pupils in their learning. Pupils become confident to discuss and present ideas, for example looking at photo sources in history and explaining to the class why they have placed certain events where on a timeline.

Last year, too many pupils were regularly absent. This has improved, but is still a key priority for the school. The school regularly emphasises the importance of attendance. Staff work closely with parents to build up positive relationships but are also firm on unauthorised absences, such as holidays during term time.

The curriculum supports pupils' wider development particularly well. Pupils have many relevant enriching experiences, such as clubs and visits. Pupils learn about valuing differences and demonstrate this in their excellent behaviour. They are supportive and respectful to each other and adults. Pupils are pleased to gain rewards such as 'concentrating crocodile' when they have worked particularly hard.

The school is very well led and managed. Many staff have worked for other schools in the trust, sharing good practice between the three schools. This has enabled the trust to retain staff while still offering opportunities to develop experience and expertise. Staff feel

supported and highly positive about working for the trust. Governors often visit alongside a professional adviser to see the work of the school in action and understand how effective this is.

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 March 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	141326
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295071
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anthony Wood
CEO of trust	Emma Lane
Headteacher	Emma Lane (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.leighbeck-inf.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school has its own breakfast and after-school provision.
- The school currently offers a 32-hour week. Following consultation with parents, this is increasing to 32.5 hours in September 2024.
- The school has a governing body that has had some responsibilities delegated to it by the trustees.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, and other senior leaders. They spoke to the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, and physical education. For each subject, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector visited a range of other subject lessons and looked at a wide range of curriculum plans and 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 took into account the responses to the Ofsted parent and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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