

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

School Lane, Harlow, Essex CM20 3QA

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 January 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Jackie Diggle. This school is part of BMAT, 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?

Freshwaters Primary Academy is a school that welcomes everyone. Staff quickly get to know pupils. This helps them to care effectively for pupils' individual needs. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Pupils enjoy learning the school's ambitious curriculum and 'exploring together'. They achieve well as they move through the curriculum. This is because the school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Pupils are happy and feel safe here. Adults and pupils share strong relationships. Pupils celebrate difference and oppose any form of discrimination. They say that everyone is unique and treated equally. Pupils live out these beliefs at this inclusive school.

The school also has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They are polite and well-mannered. They value how kind and friendly the school is. There is a calm and purposeful environment in classrooms and around the school.

Pupils are proud to represent the school in sports competitions. These include a local and regional basketball competition, a football tournament and on sports day. Pupils enjoy attending a range of clubs, including dodgeball, athletics, choir and dance. They are enthusiastic to talk about the visits they have made to local historical sites and museums.

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

Teachers have good subject knowledge and present the subject matter clearly. The use of 'big questions' encourages pupils to be curious and build a love of learning. For most subjects, the school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. In these subjects, learning is well sequenced. Pupils build their knowledge over time and achieve well. However, in some subjects there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and pupils do not remember enough about what has been taught previously. Therefore, pupils do not build their knowledge in these subjects as well as they could.

Pupils' love of reading is visible across the school. The reading curriculum is well organised. It sets out what pupils should know and by when. The school's approach to teaching phonics is effective. Children in the early years quickly learn how to blend sounds together to read simple words. Staff identify pupils who need more practice. These pupils are given timely and effective support to help them to keep up. Pupils read books that match the sounds they have learned. This helps them to practise using their phonics knowledge and become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well. The school accurately identifies pupils' needs. Learning is adapted effectively to enable pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their peers. Explanations are clear and modelled well. The school has recently opened its 'studio' provision to support younger pupils who may find the whole-class situation challenging. As a result, these pupils begin their school day in a calm and purposeful manner.

Pupils respond well to the school's high behaviour expectations. They behave well in and out of the classroom. Staff consistently model these expectations. Pupils understand the importance of kindness and trying their best. This is evident in their behaviour and their positive attitudes to school. This includes children in the early years. Where behaviour does not meet the school's high expectations, effective steps are put into place, for example through the use of external agencies.

The school promotes regular attendance, but, despite its efforts, a few pupils are still frequently absent. When this happens, pupils are missing key parts of the curriculum, including the school's effective pastoral support.

The school's provision for personal development helps pupils to understand that they need to be good role models, display kindness and develop responsibility. Older pupils enjoy being 'ambassadors' for younger children. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through various experiences. These include visitors from local places of worship. The school's provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) supports pupils to learn about life in modern Britain. Pupils understand about the importance of respect for differences between people. Pupils relish the opportunity to take on leadership roles, such as class ambassadors, sports leaders and well-being ambassadors.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel supported by school leaders. The trust supports the school well and has ensured that expectations have remained high. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not always develop their knowledge as well as they could and do not remember what has been taught previously. For these subjects, the school should ensure that pupils can make connections between their prior and current learning so that they can deepen their knowledge of the curriculum.
- Some pupils have low attendance. This leads to a disconnected learning experience, as it disrupts their learning. These pupils are also missing out on the effective pastoral support and personal development that the school offers. The school should explore further strategies to work with families and pupils to secure pupils' regular attendance.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2015.

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	139398
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345355
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Drayton
CEO of the trust	Helena Mills
Headteacher	Jackie Diggle
Website	www.freshwatersacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is one of 12 academies that are part of BMAT.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school 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 inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other leaders. He met with members of the local governing board, the CEO and the director of primary standards. The inspector also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- To evaluate the quality of education the inspector visited a sample of lessons in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, spoke to some pupils about their learning, heard pupils read 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 spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and at breaktime.
- The inspector met with staff and considered their views expressed through Ofsted's staff survey. The inspector also considered responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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