

Inspection of a good school: Langley School

Trinity Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6TJ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 May 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 not be as high 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?

This is a time of positive change at Langley School. Inspirational leaders, dedicated staff and a dynamic vision are driving improvements. All are focused on finding a way to overcome barriers to learning pupils face, caused by special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this is not consistently the reality for all pupils to get the most from being here.

Pupils have a wide variety of needs, including autistic spectrum conditions, sensory processing needs and speech, language and communication needs. Staff are caring and attentive and understand pupils' needs well. However, they do not always provide support that meets pupils' needs as closely as it could.

This is a calm, happy school, where relationships matter. Behaviour is positive in lessons and around school. Staff work hard to build positive relationships with pupils and their families. When pupils and their families need help, staff act to provide it quickly. Parents appreciate and value this.

Horse riding, forest school visits, trips and a residential enrich the lives of pupils. Cycling, climbing, football and reading tents provide exciting ways to spend lunchtimes and break times. Singing and signing assemblies provide positive opportunities for this community to come together and celebrate.

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

Since the last inspection, Langley has been through a period of instability. Several historical leadership changes have slowed down curriculum development. However, the recently appointed leadership team has brought a sense of renewed drive, enthusiasm and shared vision. The school knows what they want pupils to achieve by the time they

leave. In subjects including mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and reading, there are clear sequences of lessons for pupils to build knowledge over time to fulfil these expectations. However, in many subject areas this is not the case, which means it is less clear what pupils will learn and by when.

In some instances, there is a clear focus on what staff want pupils to learn and how. Key learning is identified and communicated so that pupils understand what is needed to succeed in that lesson. For example, in forest school sessions, teachers use visual timetables and symbols to support the learning process and so that pupils know how to complete activities successfully.

The school has provided staff with training in communication and interaction. At times, staff use this training well to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Where this is the case, pupils quickly overcome barriers to learning and benefit considerably. However, there are times when staff do not consistently use communication systems. This means that some pupils find it difficult to engage in their learning.

Reading is quite rightly a priority here, starting in the early years. The school uses a consistent approach to teaching phonics that is carefully adapted for each pupil. This ensures pupils are always building on what they already know. Despite high staff turnover in recent years, the school has prioritised training staff to teach reading well. Whole class reading and moments of shared reading enrich an early love of books. For those pupils who are not ready to learn phonics, a strong focus on developing attention and shared interest is the priority.

Pupils attend well and are happy coming to school in the morning. When attendance drops, or pupils need more help to attend, staff act quickly to support them and their families. Consequently, their attendance improves over time. There is a relentless drive here to secure regular attendance for all pupils because every day here counts.

The school is passionate about enriching the lives of its pupils. Trips to the local community, to places of worship and to the Sealife Centre by train provide pupils with an understanding of the world around them. Circle time and lessons in PSHE provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they need to do to be safe and happy in school and the wider world.

The new leadership team, supported by the interim executive board, have created a culture of excitement and ongoing development. They have ensured that the school has a shared and well-understood vision for the future. Leaders have empowered staff to be creative and make the right decisions for pupils. Staff are proud to work here, feeling valued, involved and supported. There is a palpable drive and passion for making improvements that will make the greatest difference to pupils at Langley School.

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 has not ensured that all subjects and pathways have an appropriately planned and sequenced curriculum. This limits how well learning builds on what pupils already know and how well they are prepared for future study. The school should ensure that all subjects and pathways clearly define the skills, knowledge and opportunities pupils need at different stages of their time here.
- Sometimes, staff do not communicate the learning intentions well enough. This confuses some pupils, who consequently struggle to get the most from the lessons. The school needs to ensure that learning aims are shared with pupils, frequently reinforced and then assessed to check that pupils are getting the most out of them.
- The school does not consistently implement the communication systems pupils need to access the curriculum. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school must ensure that staff act on training so that they communicate with pupils precisely to meet their receptive, processing and expressive needs.

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 May 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	103630
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343753
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Andrew Collyer
Headteacher	Antionette McCarroll
Website	www.langley.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been several changes in leadership since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post since June 2023.
- An interim executive board (IEB) has been in place since November 2022.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not make use of any 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders within the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, PSHE and communication and interaction. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with

leaders about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents and the school's website.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate and to drivers of school transport.
- An inspector spoke to members of the IEB, including the chair, and to a school improvement partner from the local authority.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Pollitt

His Majesty's Inspector

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