

# Inspection of The Lea Primary School and Nursery

Moorland Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4LE

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Inspection dates: 1 and 2 October 2024

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to attend this school. They have excellent attitudes to their learning. Pupils are motivated to achieve the high standards set by the school. Pupils are excited to come to school and they enjoy being with their friends in a caring and inclusive environment. Older pupils act as great role models, demonstrating the school values of kindness and respect. For example, they really enjoy being reading buddies to younger pupils. Pupils are safe in school.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well. The school has designed a programme of study that is ambitious and reflects the needs and interests of pupils in the school. This ambition is clear from the very start of the early years and continues through to Year 6. Staff know exactly what pupils need to know and remember to be successful at the next stage of their learning. Staff are skilled at checking what pupils know and making sure they are ready for their next steps.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Regardless of the activity, working independently or in groups, pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and manage their emotions extremely well. School routines are well established. This starts in the early years where children settle quickly and learn to share and be kind from the very start.

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

Pupils study the full range of subjects as determined by the national curriculum. The school makes sure all pupils access the full range of subjects, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has given careful consideration to what pupils learn and this often extends beyond the national curriculum. In history, the school has included many opportunities for pupils to apply their historical knowledge to their local area, for example learning about the children evacuated to Harpenden during the Second World War.

Subject leaders across the school think about the best order to teach the knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. They break knowledge down into small chunks so that pupils can build on their prior learning step by step. For example, in geography, pupils learn about rainforests in Year 5, building on their prior knowledge of biomes from Year 2 and Year 4. Staff skilfully check what pupils know and can do in lessons and when looking at pupils' work in books. When teachers identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or any misconceptions that pupils might have, they address these immediately. As a result, pupils build on their knowledge over time and have an excellent recall of what they have learned.

All pupils, including pupils with SEND, access the ambitious curriculum. The school quickly identifies those pupils who may have additional needs and provides them with support. The school ensures that classroom staff readily have access to information about individual pupils' needs in a clear format. This allows teachers to break down difficult concepts into smaller steps if needed so that pupils with SEND can access the same learning as their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school ensures pupils begin learning to read right from the start of their time here. Pupils in Reception quickly start to learn letters and their sounds. Teachers make reading fun and enjoyable. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. They take these books home to practise with their parents and carers. The school also organises workshops for parents of children in the early years, so they know how to support their children with reading at home. As a result, pupils quickly develop their accuracy and fluency in reading. Teachers use 'daily keep up' and 'rapid catch up' sessions for any pupils who need extra support with their reading. Virtual author visits contribute to creating a love of reading across the school.

The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond well to these. Pupils know the school's 'golden rules' and these are applied fairly and consistently. As a result, there is a calm learning environment throughout the school and pupils can focus on their learning. Pupils' attendance to school is high. The school builds good relationships with parents from the start of the early years so it can quickly deal with any attendance issues that may occur.

The school provides pupils with a wide variety of opportunities to develop their skills and interests beyond the curriculum. Pupils enjoy a broad range of clubs during and after school from sports to languages and music. The school plans extra-curricular visits into the curriculum so that pupils can deepen their learning from the classroom. For example, pupils visit Verulamium when studying the Romans in Year 4 and the British Museum when studying ancient Greece in Year 5. The school also invites many organisations into school to support pupils' learning. The school monitors pupils' participation in clubs and activities to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, make the most of the opportunities available. Pupils learn about different religions and beliefs and have a good knowledge of the diversity of modern Britain.

Leaders ensure that staff receive the training they need to deliver the school's ambitious curriculum. Leaders consider staff workload when introducing change. Governors know the school well. Through regular school visits and committee meetings, they have a good knowledge of the school's plans for improvement. Governors meet their statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and equalities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

|                                            |                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 117327                                                                 |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Hertfordshire                                                          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10345194                                                               |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                                              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11                                                                |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 219                                                                    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                     |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Tristan Ashman and Emma Murphy (Co-Chairs)                             |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Tracey Berry                                                           |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.lea-pri.herts.sch.uk">www.lea-pri.herts.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 20 and 21 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005         |

## Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school runs its own before-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides nursery provision every morning.
- A separately registered provider, Noah's Ark Nursery at The Lea, provides nursery provision on the same site as the school in the afternoon, as well as after-school provision. This provider is inspected separately by Ofsted.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors met with one of the co-chairs of the local governing body and several other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions 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. Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 met with groups of pupils in all key stages. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about the school's work, including about safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors also looked at staff and pupil responses to Ofsted's online surveys. They considered responses from parents to the Ofsted online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

## Inspection team

Mark Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karen Stanton

Ofsted Inspector

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