

Inspection of Longmeadow Primary School

Oaks Cross, Broadwater, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 8LT

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly, welcoming school. Pupils are resilient and have coped well with the many changes that have taken place. They feel happy and safe. Most are proud of their school and have positive attitudes to learning.

Adults at the school have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. The relationships between adults and pupils are respectful.

Most pupils behave well and try hard to meet adults' expectations. Any pupils who struggle get the help they need to improve. Pupils know what bullying looks like. They say it sometimes happens, but they trust the adults to sort it out.

Weaknesses in the curriculum in previous years meant that too many pupils did not achieve well. The new curriculum now in place is helping pupils to improve, but many still have gaps in their learning. Pupils work hard and are keen to answer questions in lessons.

Pupils enjoy clubs such as choir, pop and rock music, and multi-sports. A Christmas trip to the pantomime was a highlight of the autumn term. The recently introduced house system motivates pupils to earn house points. Older pupils can become house captains. Pupils would like more of this kind of opportunity.

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

The new leadership team is determined to improve the quality of education at Longmeadow. The ambitious new curriculum sets out what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. The curriculum is carefully ordered so that pupils build up their knowledge in each subject gradually. This is particularly important because of the gaps in pupils' learning.

Teachers are getting to know the new curriculum. Leaders provide training to support teachers' subject knowledge and to help them to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and use questioning to check pupils' understanding. They use assessment to identify gaps or misconceptions. Future lessons then address these.

Throughout the school, pupils learn the vocabulary they need for each subject. This is revisited often so pupils remember it well. In music, for example, pupils used terms such as 'pulse', 'rhythm', 'tempo' and 'beat' confidently in a warm-up game. However, teachers do not revisit other aspects of learning as effectively. Pupils often have limited recall of the other concepts they have learned about.

Reading is a priority and the school promotes a love of reading. Leaders have introduced a new programme for teaching phonics. Children in the early years and key stage 1 have a daily phonics session. They learn the sounds that they need to

be able to read new words. Older pupils who are still in the early stages of reading get daily targeted support to help them catch up. All pupils take home books that match the reading stage they are at. Teachers' confidence with the new phonics programme is growing. However, some staff are not following it precisely. This means that some pupils do not learn the sounds they need to as quickly as they could.

Improving behaviour is an ongoing focus for senior leaders. The new behaviour and positive relationships policy has had a strong impact in a short time. Pupils try hard to follow the 'Golden Rules'. In classrooms, the atmosphere is generally calm and purposeful because pupils know the expectations. If any pupil's behaviour does not meet expectations, the adults deal with it quickly so that learning is not disrupted. In early years, the youngest children know the routines and expectations very well. They learn and play happily in a stimulating environment.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders have developed a robust system for identifying these pupils' needs and putting plans in place to meet them. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. This is thanks to their individualised provision and the well-trained adults who support them.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is not yet secure. While pupils are taught about healthy lifestyles, positive relationships and personal safety, their understanding of subjects such as diversity, democracy and world religions is limited. Assemblies reinforce important values and positive messages. However, leaders' work to provide a strong programme of personal development for pupils is at an early stage.

The many challenges the school has faced were unsettling for staff. However, staff enjoy working at the school and they trust senior leaders to continue to drive improvement. The relatively new governors understand their role in ensuring that this happens. All are united in their desire to provide the best possible experiences for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff training is up to date and pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and offline. Pupils report any worries they have to the adults at school.

There is a clear process for reporting concerns. This is understood by all adults, who know what to look out for. Leaders record concerns using an online system, which is regularly monitored. This ensures the appropriate action is taken. Leaders liaise with external agencies to ensure that the right support is provided for vulnerable pupils and their families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not all follow the school's chosen phonics programme with precision. Sometimes, opportunities to reinforce learning are missed and pupils do not always have sufficient time to rehearse new sounds. This means that pupils do not all progress as rapidly as they could. Leaders should ensure that good practice is shared across the school and that all teachers deliver the programme equally effectively so that all pupils make the progress they should.
- Historic weaknesses in the curriculum have led to pupils having gaps in their learning. Too many pupils struggle to remember what they have learned and do not achieve well. Leaders should ensure that staff have the training they need to implement the new curriculum effectively, design their teaching to close gaps and continually revisit learning. This is so that pupils learn more and remember more of the important content they are taught.
- Leaders' planning of an effective programme for pupils' personal development is at an early stage. As a result, pupils' understanding of some key concepts, such as democracy and diversity, is superficial. Older pupils have few opportunities to enhance their character and leadership skills. Leaders should accelerate their work in this area so that pupils' wider development is of a consistently high quality.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	135083
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10212371
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Melany Knowles
Headteacher	Tobias Mills-Bishop (interim executive headteacher)
Website	www.longmeadow.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on roll at the school has dropped significantly since the last inspection.
- The leadership structure of the school has changed since the departure of the previous headteacher in May 2022. Interim leadership arrangements were in place from May to July 2022. An interim executive headteacher and two interim heads of school, from the Agora Learning Partnership (ALP), took up their posts in September 2022.
- At the time of the inspection, school leaders were not making use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at a sample of science and history books from all year groups.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to review records. An inspector scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documents and policies, including the school development plan, external reviews of the school and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school's improvement partner from the local authority and with the chief executive officer of the ALP to discuss their work with the school. She spoke with another representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from different year groups during lessons and at lunchtime. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school pupils.
- To gather parents' views, inspectors reviewed the 17 responses and eight free-text responses submitted to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered the views of staff by speaking with many of them and reviewing the 16 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ann Bowen-Breslin

Ofsted Inspector

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