

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery

Trent Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2JH

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Matthew Poyton. This school is part of Brickfields Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Hayley O' Dea, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Threadgold.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embody the school's 'we are proud' values. These include ensuring that pupils have a passion for learning, integrity and respect for others. They rise to the school's high expectations and display these values every day. Pupils display highly positive behaviour towards each other and to adults. Pupils show a real passion for their learning, and many achieve well as a result. They are happy here. Pupils trust the staff to sort out any issues quickly and fairly. This helps them to feel safe.

Pupils' learning extends beyond the classroom. They take part in magistrate workshops, for example. Inspirational visitors include a former Lionesses footballer, a local politician, mobile zoos, as well as Greek and Roman workshops.

Pupils have extensive opportunities to extend their talents and interests. Pupils sing in national and local festivals, play sports and learn to play musical instruments. The school's clubs are inclusive and include public speaking, Lego, origami, art and cooking.

Pupils adopt an array of meaningful leadership roles. These include house captains, school councillors, subject champions and play leaders. These roles encourage pupils to become confident and responsible leaders. This helps to ensure that pupils are ready for their next steps.

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

The school has revised its curriculum to ensure that all subjects contain the ambition and breadth that the 'PROUD' values promote. Its aim is to enable pupils to 'reach their potential and become confident, life-long learners who make a positive contribution and respect others'. This aim is reached.

The curriculum outlines the important knowledge that pupils will learn each year. Within each subject, knowledge is carefully ordered to ensure that pupils build on this knowledge over time. Staff deliver lessons that help pupils to remember this knowledge, for example practical investigations of the human digestive system. Staff routinely check pupils' learning to ensure that pupils can remember and apply what they have learned. This helps pupils to successfully build knowledge in a range of subjects. As a result, many pupils achieve well.

Children start to develop their knowledge as soon as they begin Nursery Year. They build strong foundations in communication and language through play, songs and rhymes. Within the Reception Year, children start their formal phonics learning. Expertly trained staff deliver interactive phonics sessions where all pupils fully participate. Staff then carefully check children's progress. Pupils who need extra help receive timely and effective intervention to keep up. As a result, most pupils quickly become fluent and confident readers.

There is an increasing number of children joining mid year, or pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school immediately immerses these pupils in their learning, having identified precise starting points and effective support. This helps pupils integrate into school quickly and progress well from their various starting points.

Staff know the children exceptionally well. They are sensitive to their individual needs, having been highly trained to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff ensure support is appropriate so that pupils with SEND can succeed in their learning.

The school sets very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, to which pupils rise. They are keen to learn and respectful to all. The school works very closely with families to secure support to encourage their children to attend school regularly. However, some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not yet attend as often as they should. This means they miss valuable learning and the wealth of life experiences that the school offers.

The school's provision to promote pupils' wider development is a real strength. The school ensures that pupils are extremely well prepared to be respectful citizens of the future. Pupils learn about diversity, respect and tolerance through reading diverse texts and stories. Staff and outside speakers lead assemblies explaining and celebrating their own faiths and cultures. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to debate topical issues and to understand the views of others. This helps pupils become confident to express their views.

Pupils experience democracy by taking part in national parliament week. They also vote for their school councillors, house captains and subject champions. These roles are purposeful, and pupils are proud to adopt them.

Staff enjoy working at this school. They value the subject-specific training they receive for the new curriculum and the changes that leaders make to systems which reduce their workload.

Leaders, governors and members of the trust keep detailed oversight of the school's work. They precisely identify the priorities for further development. The trust provides the school with the appropriate support and challenge needed to continually drive improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Rates of persistent absence for some disadvantaged pupils, including those pupils with SEND, continue to be high. These pupils are not fully benefiting from all that school has to offer. The school should carefully consider additional strategies and support that families and pupils need to improve their attendance. This is to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and fully benefit from the many opportunities provided.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

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	144303
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10378570
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Threadgold
CEO of the trust	Hayley O'Dea
Headteacher	Matthew Poyton
Website	www.lawfordmead.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- The school joined the Hera Multi Academy Trust in 2017 and then merged with the Brickfields Multi Academy Trust in 2023. The trust comprises of four primary schools.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning 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 met with the headteacher, school leaders and representatives from the trust, including the CEO and the chair of the board of trustees.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's records of behaviour and attendance and spoke with several groups of pupils to understand their experiences of the school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector

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