

Inspection of a good school: Links Primary School

Frinton Road, London SW17 9EH

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

Outcome

Links Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils are made to feel welcome at the school. They enjoy coming to school and greet leaders, and the school dogs, enthusiastically at the school gates in the mornings. Relationships are positive and caring. Staff teach pupils how to keep safe and encourage them to respect one another. Leaders take pupils' safety and well-being seriously.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Every pupil has access to the school's broad and rich curriculum. Pupils talk in detail about their learning and what they know and remember. They feel supported and challenged. Pupils have many opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. They participate in extra-curricular clubs and educational visits.

Pupils are clear about what is right and wrong. Bullying happens rarely. When it does, it is taken seriously by the adults and dealt with so that it does not reoccur. Pupils are proud of their school and would recommend it to anyone new to the area.

Older pupils behave sensibly in class and around the school. Younger pupils have missed some important settling-in routines over the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 are a bit unsettled, particularly when moving around the school or in the playground.

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

Leaders make sure that reading is a priority when children join the early years. They are ambitious that pupils develop into confident and independent readers. Staff are well trained to teach early reading and there is a consistency in how they teach phonics across the school.

All pupils enjoy phonics. Teachers check children's phonics knowledge and identify any gaps in children's knowledge. Any pupils who have fallen behind receive extra daily support. They also read to an adult regularly to help them to catch up quickly. Staff promote a love of reading across the school. Pupils enjoy the range of diverse books

available in classrooms. Leaders have identified that, occasionally, a few books do not match the phonics that pupils know. They are addressing this quickly.

Pupils are confident to talk about what they get wrong or areas that they find more difficult. This is because staff have created a safe learning environment for them. Assessment is appropriate and informative, and helps teachers identify where pupils may need additional support.

Staff are skilled at supporting all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND receive support in class where needed. This helps them to access the same learning as their peers, adapted to their needs.

Pupils follow a broad curriculum. It matches the content and scope of the national curriculum and helps pupils achieve highly. Leaders have identified the overall knowledge pupils need to learn for each subject. Subject programmes are typically well sequenced and consistently delivered. In mathematics, for example, teachers give pupils opportunities to learn and practise key knowledge. This increases their accuracy, confidence and fluency when doing calculations. Children in the early years use the same visuals and resources as the older pupils and are taught key vocabulary. This helps prepare them for the next stage in their learning. However, some subject planning does not identify as sharply the specific and key content or subject vocabulary that pupils need to know.

In classes, there is seldom any low-level disruption so that learning proceeds easily. Older pupils behave particularly calmly around the school. In Years 1 and 2, some pupils need to be reminded of the school's expectations at breaktime and when moving around the building. In early years, children readily follow routines. They enjoy independent learning as well as working with the adults.

Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, including choir, sports and drama. They also perform at the Royal Albert Hall and enter national competitions. Pupils go on two residential educational visits during their time at the school. This supports them in building resilience and teamwork. Ex-pupils continue to attend clubs for older pupils. Staff proudly said, 'Once a Links child, always a Links child.'

Leaders promote the well-being of all pupils and staff. Staff feel valued and looked after. All subject leaders attend regular subject-specific training. They then train and support other teaching staff. Leaders actively consider the well-being of all pupils and staff. They make sure that workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture is strong. The experienced leadership team deals with any concerns immediately and thoroughly. Leaders know pupils' families well. They engage with outside agencies and insist on the best outcomes for families. Leaders build relationships with parents and carers, and discuss concerns with them swiftly. Staff are

aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and receive regular training. They can discuss what they would do in a range of situations.

Pupils have at least one trusted adult they can talk to. They learn what precautions to take to stay safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum plans in a few subjects and phases do not identify in granular detail the specific knowledge that teachers need to cover. This means that links between new knowledge and bigger concepts are sometimes missed. Leaders need to identify sharply what pupils need to learn in all subjects and key stages.
- In Years 1 and 2, when pupils do not remember the school's routines and expectations, staff have to remind them of what is expected. Staff need to make sure that pupils in key stage 1 understand the importance of moving around the school sensibly and making good choices when in the playground.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2012.

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 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	102635
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10200015
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Skinner
Headteacher	Ciara Parris
Website	www.links.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2016

Information about this school

- The school senior leadership has considerably changed since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with all senior leaders, including the safeguarding team. They met with most teaching staff and some support staff. They met with some governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to a local authority adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- The inspector reviewed arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.

- The inspector took account of the views of pupils, parents and staff, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Aliki Constantopoulou, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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