

Inspection of a good school: Dartford Primary Academy

York Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 1SQ

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Rebecca Roberts. This school is part of Leigh Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon Beamish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Frank Green, who is responsible for this school and 30 others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school sets the highest expectations for staff and pupils. From the early years upwards, pupils happily live out the school's motto, aspiring to be 'determined, persistent achievers, learning to change the world'. Throughout the school, pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils benefit from an extremely comprehensive programme of character education. This is interwoven throughout the school's curriculum and starts in the early years. As a result, pupils do not just achieve well academically, they also learn valuable life skills such as being open-minded, reflective and principled. This prepares them very well for life beyond school.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Pupils demonstrate consistently positive attitudes towards learning. Teaching is rarely interrupted. Consequently, pupils are able to make the most of the school's excellent curriculum and the abundance of opportunities on offer to broaden their horizons. As one parent reported to inspectors: 'My child really enjoys his time at school and he can't wait to go there every day. The school encourages his learning and development in a friendly and caring environment.'

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

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious. It clearly outlines the specific knowledge pupils need to learn, for every subject and every year group, from Nursery through to Year 6. It is detailed, sequenced and coherent, which supports teachers to know exactly what to teach and when. This means that pupils learn in a precise, logical order. As a result, pupils gain knowledge, develop their skills and deepen their understanding as they move through the school.

Teaching is of consistently high quality. It is typified by strong subject knowledge, clear instruction and activities that allow pupils to achieve the aims of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early and receive excellent support to access the full curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND keep up with their peers and achieve equally well.

Pupils achieve highly in reading. The school provides frequent training and coaching that ensure staff have the expertise to teach phonics consistently well. Children are introduced to books from when they start in Nursery. Starting in Reception, ongoing assessment identifies any pupils who need additional support learning to read. Pupils are given books matched to the sounds they know. As a result, pupils become increasingly confident and fluent readers. Beyond their phonics programme, pupils are encouraged to read widely and often, and have access to a diverse selection of books. Year 6 pupils, for example, talked fondly and knowledgeably about the reading they were doing about Charles Darwin, saying: 'We love this, and it is helping us to understand things we are learning in geography and science.'

Pupil relationships and attitudes are exceptional. Learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils embody the positive behaviours set out in the school's character education curriculum. As a result, the school is a highly inclusive community where pupils treat others with respect.

The wider personal development curriculum is a strength. The personal, social and health education curriculum is comprehensive. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and can explain the features of healthy relationships. A range of leadership roles, such as academy councillors, digital leaders and sports leaders, helps pupils to contribute to the school community. The school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of high quality. This ensures pupils learn about different religions, faiths and cultures, and about the fundamental British values of tolerance, law and democracy. Pupils know that this is important and say that this helps them to be 'understanding, respectful and tolerant' members of society.

Governors, trustees and executive leaders know the school well. Efficient systems and processes keep them apprised of the school's performance and allow them to ensure statutory requirements are met. They offer highly effective support and challenge. Leaders take careful note of staff views when making decisions, valuing their collective well-being. Staff report being proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 January 2018.

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	141534
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268888
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	673
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
CEO of the trust	Simon Beamish
Principal	Rebecca Roberts
Website	www.dartfordprimary.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Leigh Academies Trust.
- The school is governed by the trust and by a local academy board with delegated powers.
- The school does not use any alternative provision currently.
- The school has nursery provision on site and a breakfast club provided by the school.
- The school is authorised as an International Baccalaureate World school teaching the Primary Years Programme.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders, teaching staff, the chair of governors and a range of other members of the governing body. The inspectors also met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the academies director, the chair of the trust and members of the local academy board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to behaviour and SEND.
- The inspectors considered the view of pupils, parents and staff through discussions during the inspection and the Ofsted surveys.
- 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.

Inspection team

James Stuart, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jenny Ashley-Jones

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023