Inspection of a good school: Mandeville Primary School

Mandeville Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 2LE

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2021

Outcome

Mandeville Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who attend this school come from many different backgrounds, all of which are celebrated and respected. Everyone feels valued as members of one large, happy school community. Pupils look forward to being welcomed in the mornings by Molly, the school dog, who helps everyone feel calm and settled. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils are kind to each other. Pupils and staff all get on well together because staff model courtesy and understanding. Pupils have been taught about bullying, and they know how to report any concerns or worries they may have. They are confident that staff sort out any problems quickly. Pupils play happily together on the playground and behave very well in lessons and around the school.

Pupils share their ideas confidently in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn, and experience a curriculum that is carefully planned and excites their interests. They listen carefully to their teachers and to what others have to say. Pupils are looked after well by all the adults who work at the school. Staff know the pupils well, personally and academically.

Parents are extremely positive about the school. They are delighted that any concerns are dealt with properly and that they can communicate easily and quickly with staff. Every parent who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said they would recommend the school.

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

Leaders are dedicated to their work and do their very best for all pupils. They have thought carefully about how to make learning interesting and relevant, including how to make the best use of the local area. Leaders have identified the important knowledge pupils need to gain, and the order in which it should be taught. Work in pupils' books, and conversations with pupils, show that pupils understand and remember what they have been taught. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning. Written work in pupils' English and mathematics books is of good quality. However, work in other areas of

the curriculum is less detailed and more likely to be poorly presented or contain errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress across all areas of the curriculum. Staff skilfully adapt the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn and achieve well.

Pupils are revisiting aspects that they found harder to understand when receiving remote education. Pupils say teachers make learning interesting and provide opportunities to recap on important information. There is a strong emphasis on asking pupils to explain what they have been learning, which deepens pupils' understanding.

Leaders ensure that the reading curriculum helps younger pupils quickly gain their knowledge of phonics so that they can read words accurately. Teachers give pupils lots of opportunities to practise their sounds. Pupils use their knowledge well. Books are carefully matched to pupils' understanding of sounds. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers. They appreciate the wide range of reading books available to them. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' progress in reading. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their reading are promptly given the support they need to help them catch up quickly.

Leaders use the local environment well to enhance pupils' learning. Through their local environment, pupils learn about key events in the past. Following their recent trip to the cathedral and abbey church, pupils spoke about the life of Saint Alban and how he lived in Roman times and was kind and helpful to others.

Leaders actively promote pupils' personal development, celebrating achievements in and out of school. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to deepen their understanding of the wider world by going on trips, taking part in cultural events and learning about British values and equalities.

Governors and trustees make a positive contribution to the school. They ask leaders challenging questions because they know the school well. The information they gather helps them hold leaders to account for the quality of education pupils receive. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to carry out their responsibilities and to be effective in their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding leaders are appropriately trained, and all staff receive training that is continuously updated. Staff know how to report concerns and how to access suitable support for pupils. Leaders deal with any issues in an appropriate and timely manner. All statutory checks are carried out before staff are employed to work at the school. Detailed records are kept.

Governors and trustees keep a careful overview of safeguarding arrangements. They support the designated safeguarding leads and check that the systems that are in place are keeping pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' writing is of a consistently high quality across all curriculum subjects. This means that some pupils are not achieving the same quality of written work in the foundation subjects as they do when they are writing in English. Leaders should ensure that expectations of pupils' writing in all subjects are consistently high.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 7 and 8 June 2016.

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.

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	139159
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10193983
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	422
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Mayo
Headteacher	Cathy Longhurst
Website	www.mandeville.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is a Nursery Year that pupils attend part time once they have turned three.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club that is run by the trustees.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and members of the school's leadership team.
- The inspector did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history.
- For each deep dive, the inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum, reviewed curriculum plans, visited lessons and met with teachers from the lessons visited. The inspector considered the work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning. He also listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.

- The inspector met with the deputy headteacher, who is both the special educational needs coordinator and the leader with responsibility for disadvantaged pupils. He also met with the children's support worker.
- The inspector met with two members of the local governing body, including the chair of the local governing body. He also met with the two chief executive officers of the trust.
- The inspector scrutinised the record of pre-employment checks. He spoke to leaders, school staff, governors, and pupils about the arrangements for safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 85 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 53 free-text responses. He also considered the six letters received from parents, 41 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and 33 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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