

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Leigh Academy Tree Tops

Brishing Lane, Park Wood, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9EZ

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Denise White. The 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 chief executive officer (CEO), Simon Beamish, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Frank Green.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff at Tree Tops live by the three school rules: be kind, be ready, be ambitious. It is an inclusive school community, where everyone is valued for who they are. Each pupil's individuality and uniqueness shines, while living up to the school's high expectations of their behaviour and conduct.

Pupils are polite, respectful and move around the school calmly. They play happily at social times. Relationships are based on mutual respect. In lessons, pupils are engaged and focused. They take their learning seriously and try their best. As a result, pupils achieve highly across the curriculum, as seen in published outcomes.

The school's provision for pupil's personal development underpins all aspects of school life. Woven through the academic and wider curriculum are well-considered opportunities, experiences and activities that help to prepare pupils for life beyond Tree Tops. For example, older pupils can develop their leadership skills by being a member of pupil parliament or a house captain. There is a sharp focus on developing pupils' communication skills so that they can clearly share their thoughts and feelings. The 'profile for success' helps pupils to be reflective and develop their aspiration for what they can accomplish in their future.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum. Starting from the early years, it is designed to develop pupils' understanding, skills and knowledge over time. The 'learning pathway' for each subject clearly sets out the core learning, vocabulary and identified end goals for pupils to achieve. Meaningful links are made across the curriculum. This meticulous and detailed curriculum thinking provides teachers with strong subject knowledge and expertise. In turn, pupils effectively build on and remember what they have been taught. Pupils confidently recall their prior learning, using subject-specific vocabulary. For example, when describing their artwork, pupils used the terms stippling, blending and cross-hatching to describe the skills they used.

Early reading and mathematics are taught consistently well. Pupils have lots of opportunities to practise and rehearse their phonics, reading and mathematics knowledge. Pupils read books that support them to become confident and fluent readers. There are regular checks on what pupils know and can remember. This ensures that gaps and misconceptions are identified and quickly addressed. Pupils who need additional support or are falling behind their peers are quickly identified. They are well supported to catch up. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have effective adaptations to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils' exemplary behaviour begins in the early years where there are clear routines and expectations. Adults model and extend children's language at every opportunity. Over time, this means that pupils can talk about their feelings with maturity. They gain independence to resolve any conflicts but also know there are adults to talk to if needed. The school's 'chatter box' provides pupils with the opportunity to make suggestions and have their voice heard. Pupils enjoy school and enthusiastically embrace all that is on offer. This is reflected in the improvements seen in pupils' attendance. The school effectively works with and supports families to overcome any barriers to their children being in school.

The school's work to prepare pupils as global citizens of the future is comprehensive. Pupils learn about the fundamental British Values and how everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils celebrate and value difference. Pupils are exposed to and explore different careers. They set themselves ambitious goals to achieve within their time at the school and for jobs they may have in the future. Pupils' talents and interests are developed through opportunities to take part in competitive sports and events, such as football tournaments and writing competitions. The variety of outdoor spaces enable pupils to take their classroom learning outside and to learn new skills. Pupils make use of the 'woodland walk', forest area and outdoor classroom. These help them to learn different skills and bring their classroom learning to life. For example, using the science garden and allotments to grow their own vegetables.

Leaders, the governing body and trust are united in their commitment to the pupils at this school and its community. There is a continuous drive to ensure pupils get the best education possible, that sets them up for life. The governing body and trust provide an

effective balance of challenge and support. Staff feel well supported by the professional development provided. This ensures they have the skills needed to fulfil their roles. Staff appreciate that their workload is taken into account by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 June 2019.

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	137882
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341702
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
CEO of the trust	Simon Beamish
Principal	Denise White
Website	www.treetopsprimaryacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2019, under Section 5 of the Education act 2008

Information about this school

- The school is part of Leigh Academies Trust multi-academy trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is an International Baccalaureate World School which is registered for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the principal, vice-principal and other members of the senior leadership team.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- 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 spoke with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also spoke with the CEO and other trustees.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Julie Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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