

Inspection of a good school: Laurance Haines School

Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0DD

Inspection dates:

25–26 September 2019

Outcome

Laurance Haines School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children's safety and well-being are central to the school's work. Leaders and staff have created a place where everyone is welcome and every step to success is celebrated.

Leaders have worked hard to gain the trust and support of families and the local community. Relationships are strong and the work of the school to bring the community together is valued. The school's informative website, the workshops for parents and carers, and the support offered in many aspects of family life help parents to understand how they can support their children's education and well-being.

A significant number of pupils have substantial barriers to learning, including joining the school with very little or no understanding of English. However, leaders and well-trained staff provide what is needed for pupils to overcome these difficulties and be successful.

Pupils say that the school is a friendly, enjoyable place. Most parents are equally pleased with the school. One parent summed up the views of many by saying: 'There is a real community feel with this school. The teachers give each child importance, and this makes them feel special.'

Pupils are well mannered and respectful of others. Behaviour in lessons and around school is generally good. Pupils say that bullying is rare, and when it does occur, staff sort it out quickly.

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

Leaders are ambitious for the curriculum they plan for pupils. The subjects of reading, writing and mathematics are well planned and taught. Leaders have identified the skills pupils need to learn and what they need to know. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are ready to move to secondary school.

Teachers capture pupils' enthusiasm by giving them opportunities to choose interesting topics to learn about. Teachers have taken these ideas and developed plans for other subjects, such as history and computing, that make clear what skills to teach pupils and in

what order. However, leaders are still developing the sequence of knowledge pupils need to know and remember so they can understand new ideas. In some lessons, teachers do not remind pupils what they already know to help them access new learning. Leaders are developing assessment systems to make sure teachers check what pupils know now and what they need to know next.

Well-trained staff enable pupils to learn phonic skills well. Pupils understand the importance of learning to read. One pupil commented: 'Reading helps you to learn about so many different subjects.' Once pupils have mastered basic reading skills, they are encouraged to read widely, including more challenging books.

Most pupils are attentive, cooperative and eager to learn. Staff are skilled at supporting the few pupils who find it hard to stay on task so that they get back to their learning quickly. The curriculum is enriched by well-considered trips and experiences such as visiting RAF Hendon and Watford Museum. In this diverse community, pupils celebrate difference and show respect for one another.

Pupils like the school's 'calm start' at the beginning of the day which helps them to 'settle in and be ready to learn'. Older pupils take on roles such as those of play leader and peer mediator, which make them 'more responsible and keep the school happy and safe.' Pupils' work as eco-warriors in school and in the local community is taken seriously. Leaders invite the local community to nominate pupils who have behaved well outside school. This recognition is shared and celebrated with parents.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. Staff work with them and their families to ensure they develop the essential skills needed to engage fully in school life.

Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with abilities that are often below those typical for their age. Many need support with their speech, language and communication, and some are new to speaking English. Along with the strong teaching of phonics in Reception, children's speaking, reading and writing skills are developed effectively. Staff also pay careful attention to children's well-being. Children settle quickly and grow in confidence and security. They behave well, follow routines and treat staff and each other with courtesy and respect. All welfare requirements are met.

Leaders have created a happy and united school community. Staff believe that leaders support their well-being. They appreciate that leaders manage staff workload effectively. There is a strong sense of teamwork and cooperation throughout the school.

Governance is effective. Governors have a clear view of the school's vision that they expect leaders to uphold. The trust provides regular and effective support for leaders and governors. The school works well with other schools in the trust to support staff professional development and share good practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All procedures and policies are in place to ensure that safeguarding is a strength across the school. Rigorous checks are carried out on adults before they can start working or volunteering at the school.

Staff receive regular training and have a shared understanding that the safeguarding of pupils is everyone's responsibility. Leaders, including the highly skilled pastoral team, work closely with outside agencies such as children's services and the police. This provides deeper layers of support to the most vulnerable pupils and families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in all subjects. However, it is clear that leaders are in the process of putting this in place. Leaders are moving forward with clear actions to develop curriculum plans further in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders and teachers are identifying the sequence of knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics so that there are better connections between pupils' previous learning and new learning. This is supporting teachers to prompt pupils to remember important knowledge and recall this so that pupils can learn new ideas successfully.
- Leaders are improving their assessment systems across all subjects to enable teachers to routinely check that pupils are knowing more and remembering more.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Laurance Haines School, to be good on 11–12 November 2014.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 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	143603
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10110252
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	452
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Liz Leeman
Headteacher	Sebastian Gray
Website	www.lhaines.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. In November 2016, the school converted to academy status and became part of the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust. The trust delegates aspects of governance to the local governing committee. The board of trustees is the accountable body.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. Many of them are at an early stage of speaking English or speak no English at all when they join the school.

Information about this inspection

- As part of this inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, some phase leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the school business officer, a group of teaching assistants and a group of newly qualified teachers to discuss the impact of the support they receive from leaders and members of staff. The inspector also met with the chief executive officer, held a telephone conversation with a member of the trust, and met with members of the local

governing committee. Additionally, the inspector met with a local authority adviser to discuss their work with the school.

- The subjects of reading, history, computing and music were considered as part of this inspection. The inspector spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work, and met with teachers and pupils. The inspector also heard some pupils read and talked to them about their reading habits.
- The inspector spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes to seek their views about the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised school policies, procedures and recruitment records. Meetings were held with some of the designated safeguarding leaders and the pastoral team to review examples of actions taken to keep pupils safe. The inspector also checked staff's knowledge of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- The school's website was scrutinised, along with a range of school documents including: the school's own self-evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- The inspector considered the 57 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and the 57 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. The inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. There were no responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil questionnaires.
- The transition arrangements for the quality of education apply to this inspection.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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