

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Laurance Haines School

Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0DD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

Laurance Haines School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jo Ball. This school is part of Inclusive Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), James Roach, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elizabeth Leeman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Laurance Haines come to school each day ready to learn. Pupils enjoy the calm start to their morning. This helps them to prepare to focus on their learning and do their best. Pupils are happy and feel safe at school.

The school aspires for all pupils to be 'a good and happy person'. Pupils live up to this. They are kind, supportive and help one another learn. Pupils are clear that if they have any problems or concerns, they should share these with staff.

Pupils learn well in lessons. Teachers explain things clearly and ensure pupils have appropriate and interesting learning tasks. The school has high expectations for all pupils in all subjects. Pupils learn a rich and varied curriculum.

Pupils take part in a range of activities and visits that develop their understanding of the wider world. They benefit from experiences, such as visiting the seaside and being given their own bucket and spade. This enhances their learning and provides them with long lasting memories. Pupils also have opportunities to attend a variety of after-school clubs.

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

The school has adopted an ambitious curriculum in all subjects. Leaders ensure this new curriculum is well sequenced in all subjects. Teachers are supported in knowing what to

teach and how to develop pupils' learning over time. There is no complacency from the school. Leaders continue to evaluate and develop their approach to delivering the curriculum. This includes making decisions about when to teach specific subjects. Pupils regularly revisit their learning. This helps them to remember their learning effectively.

The school has a well-sequenced phonics programme. This ensures children learn the sounds they need to know in the right order. However, in some phonics lessons, opportunities to practise and rehearse sounds are not maximised. In these lessons, pupils do not learn as well as they could. Rigorous checks are in place to identify anyone at risk of falling behind. Pupils receive additional small-group phonics teaching, which supports them to catch up. These continue for any pupils who need it as they progress through the school. As a result, pupils learn to read confidently.

In the early years, children get off to a strong start. They learn a wide range of vocabulary. Staff engage positively with children and move their thinking forward. The environment enables children to use what they know and apply it to their learning in different ways. For instance, children use their environment to practise their knowledge of number when counting buds and flowers.

The school is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers carefully adapt the curriculum to address pupils' specific needs. This enables pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum alongside their peers. For example, pupils use practical resources to support independent learning in mathematics. Pupils with SEND consistently build their knowledge and skills over time.

A calm and purposeful atmosphere is felt throughout the school. Pupils are usually very focused and engaged in lessons. On occasion, teachers' explanations do not precisely meet pupils' needs. When this happens, pupils' engagement is less consistent. As a result, opportunities to rehearse and embed learning are not maximised.

The school has improved the levels of pupil attendance. The school takes rigorous and consistent actions to ensure this continues.

The school caters well for the personal development of pupils. Older pupils undertake a variety of leadership roles within school. For example, school councillors meet with the governing body. They have an input in how the school can develop. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a well-developed understanding of equality. They understand the need to treat all people with respect. The annual election of pupils to a variety of leadership roles enhances pupils understanding of democracy. Trips and visits are carefully planned to provide diverse experiences. These are connected to the curriculum and support pupils to remember well. When pupils recalled to inspectors their visit to Hampton Court Palace, they spontaneously burst into songs and rhymes about the Tudors.

Governors and trustees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They understand the context of the school. They share the vision to be a nurturing school at the heart of the community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the explanations given by staff do not precisely meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils do not understand what to do. The school should ensure that all teachers have the knowledge they need to securely and consistently implement the curriculum to ensure pupils achieve well.
- Phonics is not taught consistently well across school. This hinders how quickly children learn to read. The school should ensure that teachers have the knowledge and expertise needed to deliver the phonics curriculum consistently and effectively across school.

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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in 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 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	143603
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345477
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	468
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Leeman
CEO of the trust	James Roach
Headteacher	Jo Ball
Website	www.lhaines.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Inclusive Multi Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with leaders, including the CEO, headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, early years foundation stage lead, as well as other leaders. The inspector also spoke with representatives of the trust board and local governors.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a range of school documentation, including behaviour records.
- To gather the views of staff, the inspector took account of responses to Ofsted's staff survey and held discussions with several members of staff.
- The inspector also considered the views of parents through the responses to the survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Mark Sim, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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