

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Notley Green Primary School

Blickling Road, Great Notley, Braintree, Essex CM77 7ZJ

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 headteacher of this school is Emma Saward. This school is part of The Compass Partnership of Schools trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, John Camp, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Susan Skidmore. There is also an executive headteacher, Sophie Powell, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Being part of Notley Green is to be a member of a family. Making sure pupils get a high-quality education is everyone's business. Whether it is making learning interesting, giving extra help or ensuring that everyone is safe, the school makes sure that no one is left out. Pupils' views echo these points. Pupils enjoy school immensely and take pride in being kind and respectful.

The drive for excellence is tangible. It is illustrated by the exemplary behaviour of pupils and in the way respect for others pervades the school. It shows in pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning and in teachers' focus on helping all to learn regardless of capability or background. Pupils said that learning is 'fun and serious at the same time'. This coming together of enjoyment and purpose is one of the things that makes this school successful. Bullying is rare.

A significant part of this success is the expertly designed curriculum, including the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The wealth of experiences support pupils' education most effectively. In Reception, children gain the social and emotional confidence to move seamlessly into Year 1. As pupils get older, strong personal skills complement their deepening subject knowledge. This prepares them especially well for the move to secondary school.

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

The school's success is built on three complementary principles: precision, consistency and maintaining an absolute focus on pupils' achievements. From the design of the curriculum, and the way it is implemented in classrooms, to ensuring pupils' safety and well-being, there is thoroughness in what the school does and how it does it.

The well-designed curriculum gives pupils both a breadth and depth of knowledge and skills. It is adapted successfully to meet pupils' needs and to match the school's values. A key value, for example, is giving pupils as wide an experience as possible, and this is achieved most successfully. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), support is carefully targeted to help them get the same experiences as others. This helps to ensure that pupils' learning is strong across all subjects.

Teachers use their strong subject expertise to help pupils understand the links between different bits of information. For example, in history, pupils study how different historical events influence the way we see the world today. Across subjects, the school has identified the fundamental knowledge and skills that all pupils need. In the early years, for example, the focus is squarely on ensuring that pupils have the foundational learning in early reading and mathematics that they need for Year 1.

Staff use up-to-date research to guide the way they organise learning. Again, there is attention to detail in the way new techniques are researched, trialled and adopted. Decisions are based on what works for Notley Green. This, together with ongoing professional development, results in consistent, high-quality teaching and learning.

The teaching of early reading exemplifies the deliberate way staff implement the curriculum. There is absolute consistency to the phonics approach, and all staff are trained to use it effectively. Staff check pupils' reading continuously to help ensure that they have a firm grasp of the topic before moving on. Where pupils struggle, catch-up reading sessions get them back on track quickly. This meticulous way of working is replicated across the school. Direct teaching followed by opportunities to practise and consolidate learning, ongoing checks on learning and high-quality support for pupils with SEND are the norm.

The focus on developing pupils' personal skills matches the ambition for their academic work. The personal, social and health education programme and assemblies enhance this work effectively. The programme is designed carefully so that what is taught, and when, is clear. This helps to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education, including how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Pupils, from the very youngest to the oldest, know and follow classroom routines extremely well. There is no great fuss, just an even-handed, low-key focus on ensuring that behaviour and attitudes are very strong.

The formal curriculum is broadened very effectively by an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and events. A range of clubs at lunchtime and after school provide an

eclectic series of activities from Yoga to Lego robotics. Trips and visiting speakers add further to pupils' experiences.

Leaders at all levels, including governors and trustees, contribute greatly to the school's success. From well-targeted professional development to a clear focus on staff well-being and workload, decision-making is sharp and made in the best interest of pupils.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2015.

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	138901
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345351
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Skidmore
CEO of the trust	John Camp
Headteacher	Emma Seward
Website	www.notleygreen.compassps.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Notley Green Primary School converted to become an academy in November 2012.
- The school was part of the Change Trust until it joined The Compass Partnership of Schools, a multi-academy trust, in January 2021.
- The school does not use any 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 his evaluation of the school.
- 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 visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The inspector also met with teachers.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke to trustees, including the chair of the trust.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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