

Inspection of a good school: Ladbrooke Junior Mixed and Infant School

Watkins Rise, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1QB

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

Ladbrooke Junior Mixed and Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are well mannered and welcoming. They exemplify the school rules: be ready, be respectful, and be safe.

Pupils show they are ready to learn by looking at and listening to teachers. Pupils willingly share ideas and use resources sensibly. They recall much of what they learn, be it Year 2 pupils counting in twos, fives and tens, or Year 5 pupils showing how their ability to draw portraits has improved over time. So, pupils typically meet teachers' high expectations.

Respectful behaviour is the norm, so bullying seldom occurs. Pupils play happily at lunchtime. Some enjoy playing sports like 'football tennis', while others enjoy drawing and playing board games in the cosy 'owl house'. The system of rewards encourages pupils to do their best. Pupils learn to value teamwork. They collect individual merits to contribute to their house team's total. Pupils feel proud when staff recognise their successes in the Friday achievement assemblies.

Pupils feel safe. They have very few concerns. Pupils trust that staff will listen to them and resolve any worries that they may have.

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

Leaders ensure that the reading curriculum is effective. Consistent assessment means pupils learn the sounds they need to know to improve their reading. Staff are suitably skilled. They model the correct pronunciation for the sounds letters make. Pupils read books closely matched to the sounds they know. This helps them read with increasing fluency. Following the pandemic, leaders are focusing on helping those pupils who find reading more challenging. Leaders plan to upskill those pupils' parents, providing guidance so they may best support their child's reading at home. However, these plans have yet to take effect.

Leaders have identified what they want pupils to learn by the end of key stages 1 and 2. For most subjects, these aims are suitably specific. This supports teachers to plan a clear sequence of lessons. Some less experienced curriculum leaders do not view the early years as the starting point in their curriculum development. They do not direct staff in the Nursery and Reception Years to teach specific vocabulary or ideas. This means that pupils in Year 1 and beyond can repeat learning unnecessarily. Similarly, some curriculum leaders lack the confidence to monitor provision in the early years. They are not always able to help staff recognise what they are teaching well, and how they can further improve the curriculum and their teaching of it.

Leaders have established some shared approaches to help pupils remember what they learned. The 'six a day' allows pupils to revisit past learning. This assures pupils and teachers that pupils have remembered important knowledge over time. This chosen approach works particularly well in mathematics, where pupils across the school confidently and efficiently calculate numbers. Additionally, teachers check pupils' understanding and arrange extra teaching either before or after lessons. This prepares pupils to participate more fully in future lessons.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive sensitive care. Pupils with SEND feel confident and ready to learn because of the personalised adjustments that teachers make. For example, pupils can access a quiet space during lunchtime to play happily with a friend, or have a 'daily check-in' with their go-to staff member to identify and celebrate success. Leaders rightly identify the need to strengthen the record-keeping of staff's work in supporting pupils with SEND to make sound progress.

Typically, pupils are attentive in lessons because staff make learning relevant and interesting. It is rare for pupils to fall out. Still, when they do, staff help pupils to reflect on what went wrong and how to move forwards. This helps pupils feel involved, listened to and happy to be in school.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles through physical education and the extracurricular sports on offer. Pupils aim high in inter-school sporting events. They achieve well. Pupils learn to be responsible by taking on additional roles. School council members gather ideas from pupils, share these with leaders and play an active part in improving the school.

Leaders, including governors, foster positive relationships with staff. Consequently, staff at every level work hard and are keen to receive feedback to improve their practice. Parents recognise that these positive relationships make school a happy place for their children to attend. Still, there are times where leaders could work more efficiently to effect change. This would help elevate the curriculum and wider school systems.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, oversee suitable staff checks and appropriate staff training. Consequently, staff recognise and report concerns, no matter how small. In turn, leaders

use this information to make prompt referrals. They understand that comprehensive records capture their effort to secure support for vulnerable pupils.

The personal, social and health education curriculum enables pupils to learn how to stay safe. For example, Year 1 pupils use their 'network hand' to identify trusted adults, while Year 6 pupils know how to safely use a mobile phone when accessing the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early years curriculum is not sufficiently developed in some areas of learning. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about what children will learn and when. This makes it hard for teachers in the early years to prepare children for what learning comes next. Likewise, teachers in key stages 1 and 2 are not always able to build on what pupils have learned before. Senior leaders should ensure that curriculum leaders receive the training and support they need to introduce and monitor an effective early years curriculum that provides a strong foundation for teaching and learning in Year 1 and beyond.
- Leaders identify what needs strengthening in their curriculum and wider school systems. However, improvements do not always happen as quickly as they should. Leaders should work more systematically and swiftly to address any issues in the school's provision, such as refining how teachers carry out and record the support provided to pupils with SEND.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in June 2012.

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](#)' 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	117370
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10211436
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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Cunningham
Headteacher	Tracey Webster
Website	www.ladbrooke.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. This is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- Leaders do not currently use alternative provision for any pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, five governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some support staff, spoke to some

pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy designated safeguarding lead to review records. The inspector met with the office manager to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The inspector also spoke with five governors, teachers and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- The inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school improvement plan and minutes of governor meetings.
- To gather pupils' views, the inspector spent time observing and speaking to pupils. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by reviewing the 77 responses and 54 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also reviewed some further correspondence from parents about the school.
- The inspector gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them during the inspection and reviewing the 30 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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