

Inspection of a good school: Cedars Primary School

Bury Street, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire MK16 0DT

Inspection dates:

25–26 May 2021

Outcome

Cedars Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Cedars Primary School. They have caught their teachers' joy for learning and eagerly talk about and explain their new knowledge and skills. Younger pupils show delight in the different books they are learning to read confidently and fluently.

Pupils benefit from the consistency and kindness that permeates the school. Adults and pupils share high expectations for work and behaviour. Pupils respond very well to these expectations because staff gently ramp them up from Nursery to Year 6 as pupils grow and learn. Staff are consistent in supporting pupils to work and behave well.

The 'Cedars' Way' set of values helps pupils learn how to support each other and to be good friends. There is a safe and nurturing environment. The vast majority of pupils and their parents or carers feel that rare incidents of bullying are dealt with well by staff. Parents are overwhelming in their praise for the school, especially in the light of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. One parent commented that their child 'will no doubt have a brighter future because of the efforts Cedars have put in'.

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

Cedars continues to go from strength to strength. There is a tangible sense of purpose and excitement in the day-to-day activities of the school. This is underpinned by consistent structures and high expectations for all. Staff and pupils alike know that they are learning together and are determined to do their best.

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum that supports all pupils. They have continued to evaluate and refine it, making sure that staff understand the rationale for changes and have the knowledge required to deliver it well. Early reading and mathematics are especially strong. Pupils develop a love of learning and acquire detailed knowledge and skills. Leaders are, rightly, tweaking other subjects to further improve the sequences of learning and to ensure that pupils learn as intended. For example, in science

they are making sure that pupils remember the scientific knowledge, not just the exciting experiment.

From Nursery to Year 6, teachers and teaching assistants have expert understanding of how to support pupils' learning. Staff systematically work out what pupils know and need to learn next and adapt learning to match their needs. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is particularly strong. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) uses her expert knowledge of pupils' needs to help staff to adapt the classroom and/or learning activities for pupils with SEND. These adaptations are seamlessly integrated into the life of the school and meet pupils' needs exceptionally well.

Pupils are taught to read from arrival in Nursery or Reception Year. They learn to 'tune in' to sounds and words and show obvious relish for how sounds feel when they say them. They are delighted with the wide variety of stories and rhymes they hear and join in with. Staff follow the phonics programme with fidelity, ensuring that pupils read books that they can decode so that they become confident, fluent readers. Those who need more support are given it quickly and effectively.

The high expectations and consistent approach that leaders have established mean that pupils achieve highly. Work to support pupils to make up gaps in learning following the partial school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic is effective. For example, pupils who learned from home with videos that staff made of phonics lessons during this time have caught up with their phonic knowledge well.

Leaders are committed to developing pupils' wider knowledge and understanding of the world. They have identified a need for pupils to have a stronger understanding of diversity and how that relates to life in modern Britain. While pupils learn about fundamental British values such as tolerance, this is not yet embedded as leaders intend. For example, children in the early years are comfortable talking about different types of families, but some older pupils find this trickier.

Governors and leaders are alert to staff, as well as pupil, well-being. They ensure that staff have high-quality training and the time to discuss and reflect on what this can mean for pupils. Communication is effective and all share the same goal. Staff are proud to be part of the school and feel supported to provide the best for the pupils in their care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that staff have secure knowledge of what to look for and how to respond. Consequently, staff are alert to concerns and report worries quickly. These are followed up well.

Leaders record their well-considered actions meticulously. They communicate well with families and external agencies, chasing up actions when needed. They are passionate advocates for the needs of their pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum supports pupils to develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This is particularly strong in reading and mathematics. Leaders should continue to refine and finesse other curriculum areas so that pupils consistently secure and retain the knowledge that leaders intend.
- All staff and governors recognise the need to promote diversity and enable pupils to learn about life in modern Britain. While this priority informs many aspects of the curriculum, it is not yet systematically embedded in the school culture. Consequently, pupils do not have the depth of knowledge that leaders intend. Leaders should further develop their work to ensure that these values are promoted throughout school life.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 4–5 October 2011.

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 the school and 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	110399
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10192857
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	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Warren
Headteacher	Lisa Munday
Website	www.cedars.milton-keynes.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	28 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been changes in the senior leadership team since the last inspection. The previous deputy headteacher gained a headship at a different school and new senior and middle leaders have been promoted from inside and outside the school. There is an acting head of early years during the substantive post-holder's maternity leave.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, including the SENCo. They also met with a wide range of teachers and teaching assistants. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also spoke to the school improvement partner from the local authority by telephone.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school, inspectors spoke to many members of staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy to examine their knowledge, records and

actions. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff. Case files were sampled to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm.

- Inspectors spoke to pupils from all year groups about the school and considered 164 responses to Ofsted’s online pupil survey.
- The views of staff were considered from conversations and 28 responses to Ofsted’s online staff survey.
- An inspector spoke to some parents at the start of the inspection. The 39 responses to Ofsted’s Parent View, including 27 written responses, were also taken into account.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and art. This involved discussion with leaders about these subjects, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils’ work and discussions with pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the subjects.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Burrell

Ofsted Inspector

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