

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Mitchell Brook Primary School

Bridge Road, London NW10 9BX

---

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a happy school, where every child is known exceptionally well by members of staff and peers alike.

Pupils learn and play well together. Pupils say that they feel safe, and that bullying is rare. They behave well in lessons and around the school, so their learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils proudly explain the school's 'STARS' system of values and expectations.

Older pupils are positive role models for younger ones. Leaders and teachers have high aspirations for pupils. Leaders make sure that pupils have a wide range of carefully chosen experiences to bring their learning to life. This includes writing biographies of local people who are positive role models in the community.

Pupils enjoy the many enrichment opportunities at school, including 'extravaganza' events and a range of after-school clubs.

Most parents value the support that pupils receive. They speak highly of the school and say that it is well regarded in the local area. One parent commented, 'The staff are amazing and very committed to the well-being and education of all the children.'

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

Leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils learn the full range of national curriculum subjects. Most curriculum plans clearly set out what pupils should learn and when. This helps teachers to build on pupils' learning as they move through the school. Pupils achieve well. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

However, in some foundation subjects, for example design and technology and computing, curriculum plans lack precision. The specific knowledge that pupils need to learn, and where it should be taught in the school year, is not clear.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain new learning to pupils clearly. In English, teachers make sure that new content is broken down into small steps. This helps pupils to grasp new concepts easily. In history, pupils remember prior learning. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils could explain why their biographical knowledge of local people helped them to understand more about history. Pupils were able to explain how different historical sources helped them to develop this understanding. Teachers check that pupils have learned what they are expected to know in many subjects. However, leaders have not yet developed a consistent approach to how these checks are made in the foundation subjects.

Pupils learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Staff follow the same approach when teaching daily phonics sessions. In the early years, especially the Nursery Year, children have many opportunities to develop and extend their vocabulary. However, staff do not always check that pupils can remember sounds before moving on. Therefore, some pupils have less secure phonic knowledge. Following the introduction of a new reading scheme, some pupils read books that are not matched to the sounds that they know. However, staff make sure that pupils who struggle to read receive extra support to help them catch up quickly. Older pupils enjoy reading books by a range of authors.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain subject content clearly. Pupils have opportunities to revisit and build on their previous learning. Teachers use assessment information well in some subjects, such as in English, to check what pupils know and can do. However, in some other subjects, the systems used to check pupils' learning are not well developed. This means that teachers are not aware of how well pupils are understanding and remembering new content.

Some subject leaders are new to their roles. Senior leaders have plans in place to develop their expertise so that they can check the delivery of their subjects effectively.

Teachers adapt their plans and resources to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to support these pupils. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school. They achieve well.

There is a calm and orderly atmosphere, both in lessons and around the school. This helps pupils to learn without disruption. Leaders place a strong emphasis on supporting pupils' mental health. This helps pupils to deal with difficulties in their lives.

Leaders promote pupils' wider personal development well. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. This helps them to be prepared for life in modern Britain. Before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, pupils enjoyed a wide range of opportunities to

enhance their learning. For example, pupils told the inspector how much they enjoyed visiting the ballet, attending residential trips, and visiting the theatre and sports events. Many of these activities are in the process of being reintroduced.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They said that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Governors want the best for pupils. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they meet regularly with leaders. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, governors have not maintained sufficient oversight of leaders' actions to improve and develop the curriculum.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong and vigilant culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They make certain that pupils have access to a wealth of information on keeping out of harm's way. Pupils know who to talk to if they are worried about anything. Pupils can confidently explain what they need to do to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Staff are well trained to make sure that pupils are safe and protected. They are alert to any signs that a pupil may be in danger. They report any concerns to the right people straight away. The safeguarding team work well with outside agencies and follow up any concerns thoroughly and with speed. They make sure that these pupils receive the support they need.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Further refine the curriculum to ensure that all subject plans identify precisely what pupils need to know and remember. Curriculum plans should also identify how key knowledge is to be sequenced and checked to understand what pupils remember.
- Despite reading being a continued priority for leaders, the reading curriculum is not as effective as it should be. This means that, although phonics teaching overall is improving, some adults do not support pupils in the early stages of reading by using the most rigorous strategies. Leaders should ensure that all staff are able to support pupils with their reading, and reading books are matched to pupil's phonic knowledge.
- While governors are aware that the curriculum for some foundation subjects is being developed, they have not yet checked the impact of this work. Governors need to

monitor curriculum development more closely in all the foundation subjects to ensure that they know what difference leaders' actions are having on the quality of education.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 3 and 4 November 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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101524
<b>Local authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199461
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	623
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Angela Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Theresa Landreth
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mbrook.brent.sch.uk">http://www.mbrook.brent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 November 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes to this school since the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff responsible for areas of the school's curriculum. Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, personal, social and health education, and history. This involved discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of work, discussions with teachers, discussions with pupils and listening to pupils read.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including design and technology, and computing.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. Various documents related to safeguarding, including the single central record, were looked at.

- Inspectors took account of the 28 parent responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also received 35 free-text responses and 42 responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Janice Howkins

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2021