

Inspection of Courtland School

Courtland Avenue, Mill Hill, London NW7 3BG

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since June 2008.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend this school. The ethos 'everybody can be somebody' is lived out through high expectations matched by comprehensive levels of support. Teachers are knowledgeable and kind. They know their pupils well. This helps pupils to feel well cared for. Pupils achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum, and this is reflected in how well they are prepared for secondary school when the time comes.

Classrooms are vibrant and happy places. Pupils behave very well and are thoughtful about others. In the very rare cases in which bullying occurs, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils enjoy a rich and demanding curriculum. All pupils have educational outings several times a year. The purpose of these outings is to enrich their learning. They also enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities on offer.

Pupils are supported to become leaders in the school. They do so proactively and are keen to help each other. For example, older pupils like being able to help out younger ones with reading and mathematics. They show patience and kind attitudes, which are rewarded and recognised by staff. The school is a highly nurturing environment for all pupils.

Pupils and families know that leaders and staff care for them. They trust in leaders' work and recognise that everyone at Courtland School strives for excellence. Leaders listen to families and work with them to develop their children's full potential.

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

Leaders and staff have very high expectations of all pupils. They have established a nurturing culture, centred on kind and warm professional relationships. Pupils are rewarded in a number of ways, such as having good work entered in the headteacher's 'golden book'. Pupils value the way that leaders make these rewards special and meaningful.

Leaders are ambitious for all their pupils to enjoy learning and achieve highly. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. All pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes pupils in the Reception class, whose curriculum is exceptionally well planned and delivered. Children's needs are considered every step of the way. Staff know exactly how to help each child be thoroughly prepared for their learning in Year 1.

In devising the curriculum, leaders take great care to ensure that pupils learn and remember more in a secure manner. Lessons are precisely sequenced to deepen pupils' knowledge progressively. What pupils learn in classrooms is supplemented by a range of enrichment activities, including 'magic moments'. These are linked

purposefully to the curriculum for each subject. For example, in Year 3, the most recent magic moment involved pupils planning and delivering an assembly to the whole school, linked to their study of ancient Egypt. Using dance, drama and song, pupils were proud to demonstrate how much they had learned. Every class has several magic moments each year, including school trips.

Teachers are thorough in their approach to checking how well pupils have understood their learning. They take immediate steps to address gaps, for example through individual or small-group support. Well-trained teaching assistants also revisit learning with pupils where needed. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified and planned for very effectively. All of this helps to ensure that pupils achieve very highly.

The approach to reading exemplifies leaders' work to embed excellence. Starting in the Reception class, pupils benefit from a highly effective approach to early reading, including phonics. Leaders and staff check rigorously to ensure that pupils have mastered and are able to recognise sounds, and that they can apply them in order to read words accurately. They make a wide range of enjoyable books available for pupils to practise their learning, with books matched carefully to pupils' stage in the phonics programme. Pupils learn to read fluently, and they enjoy reading.

Pupil achievement is celebrated everywhere, for example in the artwork that pupils make and the 'magic moments' books in the reception area. Opportunities for pupil leadership are well established throughout the school. For example, the school council is leading on a project to buy new equipment for the playground. Pupils have consulted with others, considered their budget, and worked on the contract. Leadership opportunities are made available to all, whether that be as playground pals, subject ambassadors, or through a range of other responsibilities.

Pupils learn extensively about the wider world. They are taught about current affairs and a range of other identities. Pupils also learn about different careers. For example, in the Reception class, children heard about the experiences of search and rescue workers. Pupils are taught about what can be learned from different beliefs, and this is carefully woven into the curriculum. For example, after the visit of a Buddhist monk recently, one class learned about meditation as a possible way of managing anxiety.

Leaders ensure excellence and opportunity for all. They know their pupils and families well. Families appreciate the support that they receive. Staff feel well supported and are proud to work at the school. Governors are knowledgeable and dedicated. They provide highly effective challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable and well trained, and they ensure that staff are too. Concerns are identified early and reported appropriately. Leaders keep clear records

and respond quickly, including making referrals to external agencies. They ensure that the required checks are made when staff are employed.

Pupils trust staff to help them, and know how to report concerns. This can be in person or using the 'please listen' post-box. Pupils also learn how to stay safe, for example when online.

Leaders have put in place a range of supportive approaches and therapies to support individual pupils, such as counselling. They respond quickly and sensitively to families when they raise worries about their children.

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	101271
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10228822
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Parag Vaghjiani
Headteacher	Lisa Walker
Website	www.courtlandschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 June 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other areas.

- Inspectors spoke to leaders, staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding, and reviewed safeguarding records. They also reviewed the single central record of staff suitability checks.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders, staff and pupils about behaviour, attendance and personal development. They also reviewed documentation provided by leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed survey responses from parents, staff and pupils. They also spoke to parents, groups of staff and groups of pupils.

Inspection team

Alice Clay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Bryant

Ofsted Inspector

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