

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Ambler Primary School and Children's Centre

Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 2DR

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2023

## **Outcome**

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

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

Leaders set high expectations for all pupils and are ambitious for every child to achieve their best. Pupils adopt the school's values positively, including the importance of self-belief.

Pupils are very well behaved. They enjoy each other's company and value their friendships. Teachers ensure pupils are happy. They encourage pupils to collaborate and work together. Pupils show respect for their teachers and adults. Bullying is not tolerated. If any bullying does occur, leaders follow it up immediately. There is a warm welcoming atmosphere across the school where everyone is accepted for who they are. Pupils are kept safe.

Pupils valued the care and kindness shown by staff. Leaders and staff work closely with families. Parents and carers typically commented that they appreciate the way the school goes the extra mile to provide support. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests, including through residential visits and yoga sessions. Leaders organise many family events, including a family visit to the seaside for parents with younger children.

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

Leaders have identified the knowledge that they want pupils to gain through the curriculum. They ensure that important knowledge is taught in a logical order to help pupils remember more over time. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach different subjects well. They use resources and explain clearly to help pupils with their learning. However, in a few subjects, teaching does not deliver the curriculum

consistently well. This limits pupils' deeper subject-specific understanding in these subjects. In the early years, staff ensure that learning is meaningful across the curriculum and prepare children well for Year 1.

Teachers check pupils' knowledge and understanding regularly. When pupils do not understand key content, teachers follow this up quickly and address any misconceptions. Teachers provide tailored support to pupils who need more time to understand subject content.

Reading has a high profile across the school. Every class has daily story time. Pupils enjoy listening to stories. Visiting authors also inspire pupils to read. Teachers encourage pupils to read with expression. All staff are trained to teach phonics consistently well. Staff help pupils to learn phonics securely. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. Teachers check pupils' phonic knowledge regularly. If any pupil is not keeping up, they receive extra support quickly. Staff help selected pupils through extra practice so that they become more confident readers.

Leaders ensure that the school's approach to behaviour is consistently followed. Pupils behave well around the school and at playtimes. In class, they have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils listen well and show respect for each other and adults. If on occasion pupils lose concentration in their lessons, teachers help them to refocus so that learning is not disrupted. Pupils have positive relationships with each other. They value friendship buddies who make sure that everyone has someone to play with.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND) carefully. They work closely with external specialists and know these pupils extensively. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively, including through adapting learning. They use resources skilfully to support pupils' access to the curriculum.

Leaders provide a wide range of enrichment activities. There are a variety of clubs, including music, sports and drama. They are well attended by all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders make beneficial use of local facilities. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about visiting the Royal Observatory as part of their learning about planets. Leaders provide pupils with careers information. For instance, pupils receive visits from guest speakers of different professions.

Staff are happy to work at the school because they feel well supported by leaders. Members of staff said they felt comfortable approaching leaders about their well-being. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly. They know the school well and understand its priorities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders assure that everyone receives thorough safeguarding training. As a result, staff know how to identify and act upon any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. Leaders make sure that pupils and their families receive the help they need. Any cases

are managed in a timely way. The governing body has strong oversight of the school's safeguarding systems.

Staff teach pupils about potential risks, including out of school. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online. Pupils said that they would speak to a trusted adult if they had any concerns.

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

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

- In a few foundation subjects, teachers do not implement the curriculum consistently well. As a result, pupils do not build subject-specific knowledge deeply in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that curriculum implementation is consistent in all subjects so that pupils build secure knowledge over time.

## **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 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in May 2017.

## **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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100397
<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255423
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	520
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Duncan Aldred
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandeep McNicholl
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ambler.islington.sch.uk">www.ambler.islington.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses two alternative provisions.
- The school appointed a new headteacher since the previous inspection.

## 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders and with members of the governing body, including the chair. The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector met with pupils to understand their views about the school.
- The inspector did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, science and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, met with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The curriculum in other subjects was also considered.

- The inspector did lesson visits together with leaders to consider the support for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils during lesson visits, around the school and in the playground. The inspector looked at behaviour and bullying records, and leaders' analysis of these.
- The inspector considered the effectiveness of safeguarding, including through discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff. Records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks, were also viewed.
- The inspector spoke to staff about their workload and well-being and considered the views of staff, pupils and parents, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Janice Howkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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