

Inspection of a good school: Colmore Junior School

Colmore Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B14 6AJ

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Colmore Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff and governors are rightly proud of their school. Leaders have an ambitious vision for what pupils can achieve. This vision is realised by staff. Parents and carers hold leaders and staff in high regard and thoroughly recommend the school to other parents.

Staff have high expectations for how pupils should behave. Pupils behave exceptionally well during lessons and play time. They are incredibly polite and respectful. Pupils are kind and thoughtful, particularly when considering the needs of others. Bullying rarely happens, and when it does, leaders take swift and appropriate action to make sure that it stops.

Pupils enact the school's seven key principles, for example showing leadership by doing the right thing. They take leadership roles seriously and are proud to become prefects, house captains and librarians. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of supporting younger pupils by listening to them read.

Pupils take part in a range of inclusive extra-curricular activities, including football, orchestra and computer coding. Pupils learn to play instruments, including the cello, flute and keyboard. Pupils perform at an annual gala concert at Symphony Hall.

Pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They also achieve well in most subjects across the curriculum.

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

Leaders are passionate about making sure that school is a positive place to be. They take great care in making sure that staff are well supported to do their roles. Governors support leaders and are committed to pupils receiving a broad and ambitious curriculum. They hold leaders to account fully.

Leaders have carefully considered the most important knowledge they want pupils to learn for every subject. Leaders have successfully developed the expertise of others so that staff possess the necessary knowledge to teach subjects with increasing confidence. Pupils are taught a broad curriculum. A few subject leaders are new to their role and do not have the same level of expertise as other subject leaders. Their curriculum oversight is more limited in these subjects.

Reading is prioritised by leaders. They have carefully constructed a reading curriculum where the most important knowledge and skills have been well sequenced. Leaders have made sure pupils read a wide range of high-quality reading resources. The recently refurbished library and reading book vending machine is a good example of this. Teachers are experts in teaching reading. They skilfully ask questions and address misconceptions during lessons. There are a range of daily phonics programmes to support pupils to catch up. All pupils practise reading at school each day. Parents are invited into school to learn how to best support their children with reading at home. Leaders expect that pupils read at home each day; the vast majority do so. There are many opportunities for enrichment of the reading curriculum, for example carefully planned author visits are a regular feature. As a result, pupils achieve well in reading.

Leaders have implemented a well-sequenced mathematics curriculum. All staff are well informed of relevant research in order to ensure that the approach to teaching mathematics is consistent. As a result, staff possess good subject knowledge and teach mathematics as leaders intend. Staff skilfully adapt the mathematics curriculum and implement regular catch-up programmes. Consequently, pupils who need to catch up and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well in mathematics.

The curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff are aspirational for pupils with SEND. Leaders have ensured that pupils are identified swiftly and accurately. They work closely with external agencies and follow advice provided. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils demonstrate that they understand fundamental British values because of the seven principles that the whole curriculum is based on. Pupils understand that others may have different opinions or beliefs. These are accepted and respected. All educational visits are planned as part of the whole curriculum, including visits to local museums and the Houses of Parliament.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that rigorous recruitment checks are carried out for all staff and governors. Staff receive a range of appropriate safeguarding training and have a good understanding of what to look for and how to report concerns. Staff are vigilant. Leaders seek the advice of external agencies and take appropriate action. Families receive a range of Early Help, and this work has a positive impact.

Pupils know who to talk to if they have a worry. They learn about how to stay safe online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of subject leaders are relatively new to their role and so do not have the same level of expertise as other subject leaders. Leaders should ensure that more recently appointed subject leaders develop their expertise further so that they develop a clearer oversight of what is working well and what needs improving in their areas of subject responsibility.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 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 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	103188
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10240682
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	478
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kevin O'Neill
Executive Headteacher	Jon Gale
Website	www.colmorej.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Colmore Junior school is federated with Colmore Infant School.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, visited lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector looked at the curriculum in other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- The lead inspector met with staff, including early career teachers, to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The lead inspector spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the questionnaire for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Emma Titchener, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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