

Inspection of Deansbrook Infant School

Hale Drive, Mill Hill, London NW7 3ED

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They describe their teachers as kind. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well in lessons and all around the school. They are kept safe. Pupils comment that bullying rarely happens at their school. Adults resolve any concerns quickly. The school's values and ethos, respect, honesty and generosity, are promoted well across the school.

Leaders want all pupils to achieve their best, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and are taking steps to improve pupils' learning, particularly in reading. However, leaders' curricular thinking does not enable pupils to acquire and remember knowledge successfully in many subjects. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading and across the wider curriculum.

Pupils take part in a range of clubs, such as chess, yoga and gardening. These clubs are well attended. Pupils enjoy the special days, residential journeys and values assemblies that leaders organise. They also enjoy visits to places such as local museums. Parents and carers value the care that pupils here receive, particularly the care provided for pupils with SEND.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy a broad curriculum across the school. In the early years and in some subjects, leaders' curriculum design sets out the goals and the small steps in learning required for pupils to succeed. For example, the mathematics curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Children learn to count to ten from an early age. Pupils develop appropriate arithmetic and calculation strategies. Staff encourage children in early years to plant spring bulbs and identify snowdrops and crocuses. In Year 2, pupils learn in more detail what plants need to survive in different habitats.

However, often, leaders' curricular thinking does not set out clearly enough the most important knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. Leaders rely too much on topics and themes rather than assessing a progression of subject-specific knowledge and skills. Pupils are sometimes confused about what they are learning.

Typically, pupils are not supported to read with fluency and confidence. Pupils do not achieve well in early reading. The school's new phonics programme to teach early reading is at the very early stages of implementation. Leaders have taken steps to ensure that all staff have begun to receive appropriate phonics training. However, the teaching of phonics is not delivered with consistency and expertise. The work of new leaders to develop early reading is beginning to deliver improvements. For example, teachers' assessments of pupils' phonic knowledge are now carried out more regularly than in the past. Weaker readers receive more support to help them catch up. Leaders do not ensure that pupils read books closely

matched to the sounds they know. In early years, staff help to develop children's communication and language skills well.

Leaders' support for pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans is a strength of the school. They identify and support the needs of pupils with EHC plans effectively. Staff provide bespoke help and guidance for pupils with a range of complex needs. However, teaching for some other pupils with SEND who receive extra support is not adapted fully to meet their needs.

Around the school, pupils show good manners and kindness to each other. They are polite and say 'please' and 'thank you' without being told. Children in early years are keen to learn and explore the learning environment. They learn effectively across all areas of learning. In lessons, pupils listen well, rarely disrupting learning. Breaktimes are lively and fun. Pupils include everyone in their games and share activities. They are proud to help each other when needed.

Leaders give careful thought to pupils' wider personal development. For example, leaders have prioritised supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health well-being. Teachers support pupils to develop their understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils visit different places of worship, such as the local church. They enjoy serving on the school council. The curriculum for both religious education and personal, social and health education teaches pupils about important concepts. For instance, pupils are taught about diversity and tolerance in an age-appropriate way. This prepares pupils well for their next stages of learning and life in modern Britain.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They commented that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. However, subject leaders do not routinely monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility well. This leads to inconsistencies in the implementation of the curriculum in some subjects.

The governing body knows its statutory responsibilities, including for safeguarding. However, it does not have accurate oversight of the school's quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders and the governing body act effectively when any concerns are raised. Staff are well trained and know how to keep pupils safe. They have a good understanding of the risks that pupils face in the local community.

Pupils say that if they had any concerns, staff would always listen and support them. Leaders work closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils and families receive the support they need.

Leaders make sure that all recruitment checks are undertaken rigorously to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. This means that many pupils do not develop reading fluency and confidence. Leaders should ensure that all staff continue to receive the guidance and training they need to successfully implement the school's phonics programme consistently and with fidelity, particularly when supporting the weakest readers. Leaders must also ensure the books that pupils read are matched closely to the sounds they know.
- In some subjects, leaders are not clear about what knowledge pupils should learn and how this will be assessed. As a result, pupils do not develop their subject-specific knowledge and understanding consistently well across the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that all curriculum plans clearly set out what pupils need to know and how teachers will check this.
- There are inconsistencies in the way the curriculum is being delivered and implemented in some subjects. Subject leaders, some of whom are new to the role, need time and training to develop the skills required to monitor and accurately evaluate their curriculum areas.
- Pupils with EHC plans are well supported. However, plans for some other pupils with SEND who receive extra support are not adapted fully to meet their needs. The delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND is, at times, not as well thought through as it is for their peers. Leaders should make sure that all staff know how to support the learning of pupils with SEND effectively.

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	101274
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10255377
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julia Hutton-Squire
Headteacher	Carole Catley
Website	www.deansbrookinfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no 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 the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leadership team and subject leaders. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out four deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject

leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during playtimes as they moved around the school. They also listened to what pupils had to say about their school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. They scrutinised the records the school keeps in relation to safeguarding, attendance and welfare. Inspectors looked at the single central record of pre-employment checks and at records of staff training.
- Inspectors spoke to parents. They considered the responses of staff and parents to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Sean Flood, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Kent	Ofsted Inspector

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