

Inspection of Central Primary School

Derby Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 2LX

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that the staff at this school care about them. They like their teachers, who are kind and friendly. Pupils know that if bullying did happen, the adults would sort it out straight away. Pupils appreciate that adults want them all to do well. They like the new topics they have just started to learn about. However, the recent improvements to the curriculum have not yet had the impact that leaders intend.

Pupils know the school rules. Most pupils follow these rules well and get along with each other. They understand that their teachers expect them to complete their work and join in. Pupils know there are consequences for not following the rules. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do need more help from adults to focus and engage in lessons. Pupils prefer it when distractions are managed so they can fully concentrate on their learning.

Pupils are proud to attend such a diverse school. They like how many different languages are spoken. This helps them to understand the world better. Pupils like outdoor learning and sports. They enjoy opportunities to perform puppet shows, visit the local church, as well as take part in sports competitions and singing.

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

Leaders and governors are determined for pupils to receive a high-quality education. They have accurately identified what the school needs to do to improve. There are some early signs that the necessary improvements are in place. However, leaders have only recently been appointed. More time is needed to make sure that the actions taken will make a positive difference. Leaders have updated the curriculum for all subjects, including in early years. They have identified what pupils need to learn and when. The curriculum is now ambitious, detailed and designed to meet the needs of all pupils.

Teachers have completed some training on the new curriculum content. However, the curriculum, including in early years, is still in the early stages of being put in place. Most teachers are still getting to grips with what they need to teach and how best to adapt their teaching for all pupils in their class, including pupils with SEND. Some teachers are not yet delivering the curriculum as leaders intend. This means pupils have gaps in their knowledge and misconceptions that remain.

Leaders promote reading. They encourage pupils to read a range of high-quality books. Leaders have ensured that a strong phonics programme is in place from Nursery upwards. Most staff have had training on how to deliver this programme. Most children in early years and most pupils across the school are taught how to read confidently and accurately. However, not all staff are fully equipped to support weaker readers effectively. They also do not check thoroughly enough if the books these pupils are reading accurately match their reading ability. This results in weaker readers falling further behind their peers.

Some pupils with SEND are not achieving the best possible outcomes. Adults do not match activities well enough to these pupils' needs. Teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Leaders do not check thoroughly enough how well pupils with SEND are learning. Staff are not always confident in managing these pupils well and rely on leaders to support them. As a result, these pupils miss learning time and on occasions, their behaviour disrupts the learning of others.

Leaders have a clear behaviour policy. This is understood by staff and pupils. Children in early years are particularly well behaved. They listen well and have a clear understanding of rules and routines. In the rest of the school, pupils usually play well together. However, some pupils who need additional support struggle to follow the behaviours expected when not having their needs appropriately met.

Leaders' actions have seen improvements in pupils' attendance. Leaders are now addressing pupils who are not punctual.

Leaders ensure pupils follow a broad personal development programme. Even the youngest children know how to eat healthily and exercise. Pupils respect difference and have an emerging understanding of equality. Pupils are taught about discrimination and inappropriate prejudicial language. Staff use the school's cultural diversity to help pupils prepare well for life in modern Britain. Pupils respect other religions. They understand the rule of law and democracy.

Staff are positive about working at this school. They feel their workload is manageable and appreciate leaders' support.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties. Governors have benefited from local authority support and are becoming more effective in holding leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are kept safe at this school. Pupils are taught about how to stay safe online. They have visits from the police to learn about the risks of criminal exploitation and the dangers of knife crime. Leaders work with charities such as the NSPCC to ensure pupils know who can help them outside of school.

Staff receive the latest safeguarding training and are given regular updates. Staff know how to report concerns about pupils and adults. Leaders are tenacious in their follow-up of these concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The updated curriculum is not being consistently implemented across the school,

including in early years. Pupils are not being given work matched well enough to the curriculum aims and content. Pupils' gaps in their learning are not being addressed. Their misunderstandings are not always corrected. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have sufficient subject-specific knowledge and training in how to teach it where needed so that teachers are clear on curriculum expectations. Leaders and governors then need to check rigorously that all teachers are delivering the curriculum as intended.

- Some staff are not effective in adapting how they teach the curriculum for pupils with SEND or in managing pupils' complex needs. Expectations of what these pupils can achieve can be too low. As a result, these pupils often disengage, can distract other pupils and do not achieve their best. Leaders need to provide staff with focused training on how to adapt provision effectively to meet these pupils' academic and communication needs. Leaders need to check that the teaching is suitably ambitious for pupils with SEND and that these pupils are routinely engaging in their learning and achieving and socialising well.
- Some weaker readers do not read books that are matched to their reading ability. They are not always given the right support to catch up quickly. This means these pupils fall further behind where they should be for their age. Leaders need to ensure that reading assessments are accurate and these pupils access high-quality reading support that addresses their needs. Leaders need to check that these actions enable pupils to learn to read quickly.

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	117156
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10268578
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kay Richards
Headteacher	Sabriye Wright
Website	www.central.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 December 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005,

Information about this school

- Currently, the school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school runs its own before- and after-school provision.
- The current headteacher took up her post in April 2023. A substantive senior leadership team is in place for September 2023.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, the acting assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the behaviour and safeguarding leader, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector met with all members of the governing body.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspectors looked at the arrangements for safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks. The inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the systems and processes to support safeguarding and the safeguarding ethos in the school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 28 free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate and looked at correspondence sent directly to the team. Inspectors considered the 31 responses to the staff survey. They also spoke to a range of staff during the inspection. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. However, inspectors spoke to many pupils from different year groups during the inspection.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Emma Breckenridge	Ofsted Inspector
Ruth Brock	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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