

Inspection of a good school: Watling Park School

Pavilion Way, Burnt Oak, Barnet HA8 9YA

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

Watling Park School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school, where pupils are happy and safe. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can and should accomplish. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children in the early years learn routines, listen to staff, and follow instructions. Pupils' behaviour rarely disrupts learning in class.

Pupils are kind and respectful, and they want to do well. They are proud of their achievements and enjoy the experiences that leaders organise, including musical productions, printmaking and chess, visits to museums, dance festivals or a residential journey to Cuffley Camp.

Pupils want to help make their school a better place. They helped to choose the school's values and actively demonstrate them in school. They are proud of the roles they have in school, including acting as members of the school's parliament and the green council. They feel that their contributions are valued, that they are listened to, and that they make a difference to their school and wider community. Pupils raise funds for charities and to buy equipment so that the school can be more environmentally friendly.

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

Leaders have reviewed and refined the curriculum. The curriculum is broad, and it aligns with the subjects and aims of the national curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the most important knowledge and skills in most subjects, including what children will learn in Reception. The curriculum supports children in the early years to be prepared for their next school stage when they move into Year 1. Typically, leaders have structured the curriculum so that pupils revisit prior learning and develop their knowledge over time. This supports pupils' learning, as they build on what they already know. In a few subjects, the curriculum is not as carefully thought through to identify what pupils need to know and when it should be taught. Sometimes, activities in lessons are not well chosen to help pupils follow the curriculum. This means that, in some subjects, teaching does not ensure

that pupils routinely learn or practise new knowledge and skills as effectively as in other subjects.

Teachers use questioning to check pupils' understanding in lessons, and they provide feedback to correct misconceptions and strengthen understanding. In some subjects, checks on what pupils know, remember, and can do over time are not as effective at picking up and addressing any gaps or misunderstandings in pupils' learning. As a result, sometimes, pupils do not remember as securely what they have been taught.

Leaders identify the learning needs of pupils with SEND. They work with a range of professionals to understand how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers, including those in the early years, support pupils with SEND to follow the same curriculum as other pupils.

Leaders have rightly prioritised reading, and they ensure that it is given high importance in the curriculum. Children in the early years get off to a swift start with learning to read. Staff regularly check if pupils are keeping up with their phonic knowledge. They use these checks to identify where pupils may need additional help. Leaders put appropriate support in place to help pupils catch up. Leaders are introducing new books for pupils to read at home. These books closely match the sounds that pupils know.

Leaders have put in place a well-sequenced curriculum for personal, social and health education. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of relationships and taught the importance of respecting everyone, regardless of differences or background.

Those responsible for governance, including the local advisory board, trustees and wider trust, understand their roles. There is a review structure in place that ensures accountability through scrutiny of the school's work and challenging conversations with leaders.

Teachers comment that leaders do all they can to reduce workload and support them at times of need. However, the workload of leaders is too great at times. This means that, sometimes, leaders do not check the impact of some subjects robustly or ensure that teaching staff receive subject-specific training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the needs of pupils and the school's community well. They make sure that all staff are appropriately trained to keep pupils safe. A culture of safeguarding is well embedded. Staff identify safeguarding concerns and report them appropriately. Leaders take effective action to provide support for vulnerable pupils when concerns are raised by staff or other agencies.

Leaders make use of other professionals and organisations, including the police, to deepen pupils' understanding of how to be and keep themselves safe. This includes

ensuring that pupils are encouraged to travel to school safely and keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the tasks and activities set by teachers are not well chosen to support pupils' learning of the curriculum. This means that pupils do not deepen their knowledge or learn essential skills. Leaders should ensure that the implementation of the curriculum aligns with the progression of knowledge and skills mapped out by subject leaders.
- Checks on what pupils know, can do and remember over time are uneven across subjects. The prior learning of some pupils is not securely embedded in their memories, and some pupils have not developed the skills they need to be ready to move on to new topics or content. Leaders should ensure that the checks made of individual pupil's knowledge and skills routinely identifies and addresses any gaps and misconceptions so that pupils are supported routinely to know, remember and do more.
- Some curriculum thinking is not as developed and refined as in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that curriculum thinking in all subjects identifies clearly what should be taught and when.

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 3 and 4 May 2018.

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	142114
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10293291
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Delaney
Headteacher	Liz Haynes
Website	www.watlingparkschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, the school was making use of alternative provision at the Family School.
- The school is a member of the Bellevue Place Education Trust.

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 met with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders in the school. The inspector spoke with members of the local advisory board, trustees and a representative from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.

- During the inspection, the inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including in relation to safeguarding, the wider curriculum, attendance and pupils with SEND.
- The inspector spoke with leaders and staff to understand how workload and well-being are taken into account in the school.
- The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Kieran Bird, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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