

Inspection of Cassiobury Infant and Nursery School

Bellmount Wood Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 3PE

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this happy and kind school. They enjoy learning because the school provides many broad and interesting educational opportunities. Pupils and adults show respect and kindness to one another. Pupils feel safe.

Pupils particularly enjoy playtimes. The school has a wide variety of activities that cater to pupils' interests. These help the pupils to develop physically and socially and to keep fit and healthy. Pupils enjoy choosing what and with whom they play.

Pupils live up to staff's high expectations. They have a well-developed and age-appropriate sense of what is right and wrong. Pupils understand and follow the school rules. They can explain how this helps them to know what they should and should not do.

Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. This helps pupils develop into well-rounded individuals. Pupils learn discrete subjects and topics and the school provides various themed weeks and days. These help pupils to learn the appropriate subject knowledge. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy having extra roles and responsibilities, such as being monitors in the hall or being a member of the eco group. These roles help them to develop into responsible citizens.

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

The school has well-structured and carefully sequenced curriculum plans. Language development and revisiting important knowledge have a high priority. This enables pupils to learn a breadth of knowledge and deepen this knowledge every year. The school carries out checks to make sure that pupils learn the intended curriculum. When gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified, leaders change the planned curriculum to help pupils to catch up. Pupils are well prepared for junior school.

Leaders have designed teaching approaches to help pupils remember important subject knowledge. Where these approaches are used well, pupils achieve highly. Where they are not used consistently, or staff subject knowledge is less secure, the pace of learning slows, and some pupils come off task or do not carry out the tasks as leaders intended. This can hinder those pupils' progress in some subjects.

Pupils love to read. They can discuss all the books they have read and why they like them. Pupils learn to be ready for reading in the nursery by recognising sounds and reading rhymes and songs. Pupils learn phonics as soon as they start in Reception. When they are ready, pupils read books that match their phonic knowledge. This gives them the practice they need to become fluent and confident readers. Pupils who need extra help with reading receive this for as long as needed.

Teaching in the early years enables children to achieve highly. The curriculum is adapted to help children learn a broad and rich set of knowledge and skills. Communication and language have a high priority. Staff work together to make sure that children's communication skills are strong, for instance, when they learn about their local area. Children can talk about this with clarity and understanding, using appropriate and well-developed language. In the well-designed environment, children are highly engaged and share and give and take well. Children are well prepared for Year 1 and achieve highly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. The school works with parents and carers to build a clear picture of pupils' strengths. The school uses this knowledge to devise bespoke learning plans so that pupils with SEND can learn the same curriculum as their peers successfully.

Pupils behave well around the school. They respect all the adults in the school and each other. They are very keen to learn and relish their learning opportunities.

Pupils show a deep understanding of diversity and their community. They learn about different religions and types of families. They know that difference should be celebrated and that it makes no difference to whom they make friends with. Pupils can participate in a wide variety of clubs and extra-curricular activities that promote pupils' personal development particularly well. The school celebrates different heritages. This helps the community to feel involved with the school.

Leaders engage well with parents. Parents have high praise for the staff for being available, friendly and knowing their children well. Governors support the leadership team and carry out all their statutory duties. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance and make sure that parents know how good attendance means that pupils can achieve their very best.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Where teachers do not consistently use the school's chosen pedagogical approaches or have less secure subject knowledge, information is not presented as clearly and precisely to pupils. Pupils are then unclear about what they need to do when working independently. This means they are less engaged and do not achieve as well as they could. The school must ensure that staff have secure knowledge of all the subjects they teach and that the school's chosen pedagogical approaches are used consistently and 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117293
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288455
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	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Umaang Pabari
Headteacher	Charlotte Cooper
Website	www.cassioburyinfants.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2011

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider of education.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and geography. The inspectors also carried further explorations into the writing curriculum, history, and personal, social and health education by looking at workbooks, carrying out some lesson visits and talking to pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of staff, leaders and pupils; and

considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with some members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including leaders' school development plans and the school self-evaluation document.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and in lessons.
- One inspector met with parents before the start of school.
- The lead inspector considered the 142 responses and 98 free-text responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors also considered the 35 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Lawrence

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Stanton

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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