

Inspection of May Bank Infants' School

Basford Park Road, May Bank, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 0PT

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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 14 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?

This is a welcoming and friendly school, where pupils are happy and safe. Pupils are kind, well mannered and proud of their school. Pupils behave exceptionally well. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. As governors said, 'The children here are loved,' and they are.

The school has high expectations of pupils. As soon as the children arrive in Nursery, they are immersed in school life and settle quickly. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported to achieve well, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and off-task behaviour is extremely rare.

The school provides pupils with a range of activities, experiences and visits that go beyond the expected. The school is fully inclusive to ensure that all pupils benefit. For example, staff supported pupils with sensory needs to attend the theatre. Staff explained what the theatre was like, and pupils listened to the music beforehand. This allowed the pupils to be fully prepared so they could benefit from the experience. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop skills and talents, for example in the African drumming club and in the school's art exhibition.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. This starts in the early years. Learning is carefully planned so that from the moment children start in Nursery, they are exposed to exciting and meaningful learning opportunities. Adults spend time interacting with children and model high-quality speaking and listening. Children enjoy learning in the carefully designed indoor and outdoor areas. Through well-established routines, children quickly become independent and confident learners.

Pupils with SEND are very well supported in lessons. All staff are knowledgeable about the individual needs of the pupils. This knowledge is shared across the school so there are consistent approaches during learning and social times, such as breaktimes. In lessons, pupils are well supported through careful scaffolding to help them complete work alongside their peers.

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start in Reception. Staff are very well trained in the school's approach to teaching reading. For pupils who need additional practice, support is quickly put in place to help them catch up. As a result, most pupils are confident readers by the end of Year 1.

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum. In English and mathematics, pupils are taught the foundations of learning that help them to become fluent in these subjects. Staff use assessments well to find out what pupils can and cannot do. They then use this information to ensure that they revisit important knowledge

and skills to help pupils remember their learning over time. However, in some of the foundation subjects, the curriculum is not as sharply planned and sequenced. This means in these subjects, the curriculum does not develop pupils' knowledge and skills as securely. At times, the work given to pupils does not support the intended learning that should be taking place.

Pupils, from the early years upwards, show an emotional, social and academic maturity well beyond their years. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They have excellent manners and move around the school calmly. Lunchtimes are harmonious and all pupils are included in games and activities. Pupils also show a great deal of empathy and understanding to others. For example, one pupil discussed how 'other pupils are allowed to walk around, as they have autism so may need a little break.'

The school's approach to character development is exceptional. Leaders ensure that carefully planned trips and opportunities enhance the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons. Participation is carefully monitored to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to take part and develop their individual gifts and talents. The school explicitly teaches about differences and equalities. For example, they held a disability sport awareness enrichment day so children could understand about differences and how disabilities can be overcome.

Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are well informed and are kept up to date by school leaders. They understand the strengths and areas to develop for the school. Staff are incredibly proud to work at the school. They value the care and support from senior leaders and governors. Parents and carers are also overwhelmingly positive. They appreciate the way they are included in the life of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff are well trained and know how to identify and report concerns. Record-keeping is detailed and concerns are acted upon quickly when they arise. The school works effectively with external agencies to get pupils and families the help they need.

Pupils are taught to keep safe through a well-planned curriculum. Pupils talk confidently, in an age-appropriate way, about how to keep safe online and stranger danger.

However, inspectors found some minor administrative errors in relation to pre-employment and recruitment checks on the single central record. The school acted promptly to rectify these during the inspection and no pupils were at risk because of this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum has not been broken down and sequenced into small enough steps of learning. Consequently, the work given to pupils does not always support them to understand their learning well enough. This means that pupils do not always learn and remember the key learning that leaders expect them to. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum precisely identifies what pupils should know, so the work given to pupils helps them to know and remember more over time.

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	124115
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256877
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	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ruth Smith
Headteacher	Pauline Coxon
Website	www.maybank.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has a nursery on site that caters for three-year-olds.

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 met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers. They also spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alexandra Beardmore

Ofsted Inspector

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