

Inspection of Camps Hill Primary School

Chells Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 0LT

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Emma Flawn. This school is part of The Claxton Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Robert Staples, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Claire Kemp.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school expects all pupils to work hard and learn well. Pupils enjoy engaging and interesting lessons. However, children in early years require more support with their learning to achieve as well as they could.

Pupils are happy and safe here. They are confident that any of the adults they choose would help solve any problems that might occur.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times of the school day. There is a calm atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils know what is expected of them. They believe that the school's approach to behaviour is fair and they respect the school rules.

Pupils have warm relationships with each other and with the staff. Pupils are polite towards each other. For example, they can disagree on the right answer to a question while remaining courteous towards each other.

Pupils take part in a range of activities that develop their confidence and understanding of how to be healthy and safe. For example, they 'eat to defeat' their vegetables to encourage healthy eating. Pupils take part in a wide variety of after-school clubs.

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

The school has made positive changes to the curriculum since the last inspection. The curriculum is ambitious, followed consistently by staff and ensures pupils learn the full range of subjects.

The school has ensured that reading is prioritised for all pupils. It has adopted a well-sequenced phonics curriculum, and children quickly learn the sounds they need to know. Leaders provide training so that staff teach phonics consistently well. Staff use accurate checks to swiftly identify anyone falling behind in reading. This includes any older pupils who may not have learned all their sounds. Any pupils who find reading tricky receive extra teaching in small groups to help them catch up. As a result, pupils learn to read confidently. Older pupils enjoy reading and have impressive knowledge of a range of authors. Teachers read to pupils daily. Pupils enjoy these books, and this develops a love of reading.

In all subjects, the specific knowledge the school wants pupils to learn is set out clearly and builds knowledge in small, logical steps over time. In addition to this specific knowledge, the school has explicit expectations around the skills pupils should develop. Teachers have been provided with extensive training. This means that they can confidently and expertly teach the curriculum as intended. As a result, pupils are attaining well. They can recall what they have been taught, and produce good-quality work which reflects this.

However, in some foundation subjects, checks on pupils' learning are not sufficiently accurate. This is because the checks that staff use are not yet fully aligned to the updated curriculum. This means staff do not have a clear understanding of how secure and deep pupils' understanding of wider concepts is. This prevents some pupils maximising what they are capable of achieving in these few subjects.

In early years, reading and mathematics are taught well. Staff know exactly what to teach and when in these subjects. As a result, children get off to a good start in these subjects. However, in other subjects, there is a lack of clarity around exactly what children need to learn. This leads to gaps in children's knowledge. Additionally, some staff lack the expertise to manage the specific teaching strategies and approaches needed in early years. Too many children are not well prepared for their learning in Year 1. New leaders are aware of this, and recent changes in early years are starting to stabilise due to their actions. However, this work is still very much in its infancy.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that teachers carefully adapt the curriculum to address specific needs. For some pupils, this means a very individualised curriculum. For others, adaptations enable them to learn alongside their peers. Most pupils with SEND make good progress.

The school has a well-considered approach to the personal development of pupils. Leaders have ensured that opportunities to learn a wide range of real-life skills are woven throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils learn basic first aid in Year 6 and road safety in Year 4.

Governors have a good understanding of their statutory and broader responsibilities. They have taken timely and impactful actions to support the school to move forward from the last inspection. Along with leaders, they have a clear, strategic plan to build on this momentum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in the early years does not equip children with all of the subject-specific knowledge they need for their next steps. This means that children are not as ready as they could be to learn the content in foundation subjects in Year 1. Leaders should ensure that the early years curriculum contains clearly all of the specific knowledge that children need to know in all subjects by the end of Reception.

- Some staff in early years do not have the precise pedagogical knowledge to teach the early years curriculum confidently and well. This hinders how well children learn and achieve. Leaders should provide tailored training and support for all early years staff so they have the required expertise to deliver the curriculum effectively.
- Assessment of pupils' knowledge in foundation subjects does not always give staff the information they need to support pupils. Leaders must ensure that checks on learning reflect the updated curriculum ambitions so that they can accurately ascertain how well pupils are retaining the depth of knowledge they want them to have.

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	143786
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10295091
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	501
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Kemp
CEO of the trust	Robert Staples
Headteacher	Emma Flawn
Website	www.campshill.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Camps Hill Primary School is part of The Claxton Trust. This is a multi-academy trust that the school joined on 1 April 2017.
- The school has a Nursery for pupils aged two to four years.
- The school offers before- and after-school childcare provision for its pupils, which is run by the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and a panel of trustees and governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, scrutinised curriculum documentation, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school development plan, curriculum planning documentation and behaviour records.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, including in lessons and during breaktimes. Inspectors also reviewed the 165 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To gather the views of staff, the inspectors took account of the 25 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and held discussions with several of them.
- The inspectors spoke to parents to gather their views. The inspectors also considered the 101 responses to the parents' survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Mark Sim, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Webb	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Breckenridge	Ofsted Inspector

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