

Inspection of Exhall Cedars Infant School

Trenance Road, Exhall, Bedworth, Coventry, West Midlands CV7 9FJ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

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

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a warm welcome from pupils and staff at this inclusive school. The school's values of kindness, respect, honesty, resilience and nurture underpin much of what happens here. They contribute to the school being a happy and vibrant learning environment where pupils start their education. Staff want the absolute best for pupils. Positive relationships contribute directly to how happy and safe pupils feel.

Across the curriculum, pupils do well because adults support them skilfully and have high expectations. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), expectations are equally high. Teachers carefully adapt lessons to make the learning accessible.

There are high expectations of behaviour here. Pupils meet these consistently well. They are polite, courteous and confident. The school helps them to become independent and resilient from a very early age. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in class and in the school's exciting outdoor spaces.

Everyone is enormously proud of the unique and extensive outdoor provision. The contribution this makes to the curriculum and to pupils' development is significant. Pupils become risk-takers and problem-solvers in safe, engaging environments. They learn to work together harmoniously and this contributes strongly to calm, purposeful playtimes and lessons.

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

From pre-school into key stage 1, the school has created a well-considered and sequenced curriculum. This is reviewed and adapted regularly so that it fits the needs of pupils. The school has ensured that lessons have a clear, consistent structure that pupils become familiar with. This predictability helps pupils to learn well in subjects, including music.

Pupils develop their numeracy skills and become competent mathematicians, building on the foundations taught in the early years. Every lesson starts with revisiting work from previous lessons to help pupils consolidate their mathematical knowledge. Pupils typically use mathematical vocabulary accurately in lessons. Teachers notice and correct any misconceptions that arise.

Staff teach phonics effectively because the school has an established, successful and consistent way of doing so. The use of mnemonics and simple phrases helps pupils to become secure in their knowledge. By the time pupils leave this school, most are fluent readers, ready for the challenges of junior school.

Teachers engage pupils and present information clearly. Developing pupils' language and vocabulary is a school focus. However, sometimes staff miss opportunities to model spoken or written language precisely, which would help pupils to improve their oracy or writing further.

Support for pupils with SEND is a strength. Staff are skilled at identifying pupils' needs and provide effective support. The school is particularly successful at providing for pupils with complex needs. There is a relentless drive to make the necessary adaptations to include all pupils in school life. The school makes good use of a strong network of external experts and acts swiftly on the advice they give.

The school does a lot to help pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about staying safe and healthy. For example, they know about the benefits of eating healthily and drinking plenty of water. They understand about staying safe online by not talking to people they do not know or sharing personal information. At lunchtimes, pupils love taking advantage of the impressively curated outdoor space. Pupils are outside in all weathers, immersed in a wide range of activities, including using the zip-wire, digging at the beach and building enormous towers out of car tyres. This space has been transformational in enriching pupils' social and physical development.

Parents speak highly of the school. They appreciate the opportunities to attend curriculum information sessions. Since the last inspection, the school has been successful in reducing pupil absence. However, there are still pupils missing too much of their education. The school continues to focus on this as a priority.

A passionate and involved governing body offers effective support and challenge to the school. Governors know the school well and ask the right questions to find out more. They share in the strategic direction and in setting school priorities for continued improvement. The school has been outward facing and successful in working with the local authority to develop and improve practice since the last inspection.

There is an impressive sense of togetherness among the staff at Exhall Cedars. They feel valued and are very proud to work at such a caring and exciting school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Adults do not model written or spoken language as precisely as they could in some lessons. This means they miss opportunities to further develop pupils' language and vocabulary. The school should ensure all staff demonstrate precision when speaking to, and writing with, pupils so that high expectations are made explicit to pupils at all times.
- A number of pupils are absent from school too often. This means they miss out on valuable lessons and so find accessing future learning more difficult. The

school should further explore alternative ways of engaging with parents so that they bring their children to school every day and on 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	130898
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10294557
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Ann Florence Johnson
Headteacher	Sharon Hillyard
Website	www.exhallcedars.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a pre-school and a nursery on site under Community Facility Powers as set out in section 27 of the Education Act 2002.
- There is before- and after-school care provided on site by an external provider.

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 held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, music and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to familiar adults.
- An inspector met with members of the board of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes. They visited the lunch hall and the outside area at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's website.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

Mary Maybank

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