

Inspection of Coates Way JMI and Nursery School

Coates Way, Garston, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 9NW

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a friendly and nurturing environment. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Staff are vigilant in picking up any signs that pupils need help, including with their emotional and mental health. The school offers various strategies to support pupils and give them a safe space to talk. These include lunchtime well-being 'drop-ins' and play therapy.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils follow the school rules and work hard in lessons. In social times, pupils from different year groups play well together. Pupils are keen to help others and take on responsibility. For example, pupils who are 'play leaders' distribute and collect playground equipment, and 'pupil champions' propose ideas to improve the school.

The school enriches the curriculum to broaden pupils' understanding of the world. For example, pupils in Year 6 get to try out their language skills during their residential trip to France. As part of their learning about healthy lifestyles, pupils make nutritional snacks and enjoy getting some fresh air during the 'daily mile.' Music is an important part of school life, with weekly singing assemblies and opportunities to perform in concerts and the school's summer fair.

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

School leaders and governors have instilled a culture of high standards. They are attuned to the needs of their pupils and committed to ensuring all pupils receive a well-rounded education. Staff enjoy working together as a team. Leaders are mindful of workload and value their staff. For example, they ensure staff get back the time that they give up to provide a wide range of extra-curricular clubs for pupils.

The school has an ambitious and broad curriculum. Pupils study a range of subjects from Years 1 to 6. Staff have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and in what order. In the early years, curriculum thinking is not as well developed, particularly around how to develop children's language and communication skills. This lack of precision means that sometimes staff do not maximise opportunities to promote children's language and communication.

In many subjects, pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of what they have been taught. For example, in mathematics, pupils have a thorough grounding in mathematical concepts. They use mathematical language confidently to explain their reasoning and workings out. Pupils' outcomes in national assessments show that they are well prepared for the transition to secondary school. The school has worked to improve the standard of reading, in particular, across the school. Teaching staff are well trained in delivering phonics. They help pupils to master the knowledge they need to read fluently. Weaker readers receive effective additional support to catch up quickly.

In some subjects, pupils have not secured essential subject knowledge and have gaps in their learning. The school has recently reviewed the curriculum in these subject areas.

Staff are in the process of adapting new programmes of study for these subjects but are not fully familiar with the changes to subject content. More work is needed to tailor these new schemes to suit pupils at this school.

In lessons, staff explain concepts clearly and model the skills that they want pupils to develop. For example, in art and design, pupils in Year 2 followed examples and clear instructions to draw a teddy bear using a range of shapes. Staff give pupils regular opportunities to recap and practise their previous learning. They check pupils' understanding systematically and address misconceptions as they arise.

Since the previous inspection, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has significantly increased. Staff identify pupils' needs at an early stage and are relentless in securing specialist support where it is needed. Staff adapt learning successfully and use personalised approaches to help each individual achieve well. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND, and those who are disadvantaged, are fully included in all aspects of school life.

In classrooms, lessons are settled and staff manage pupils' behaviour skilfully. Pupils follow instructions and listen closely to their teachers. They are eager to learn, showing a willingness to ask questions and discuss their ideas. The school takes effective action to improve attendance rates and reduce persistent absence.

The school is a diverse school community. Pupils are respectful to each other and to staff. They are taught about the differences between people and the importance of tolerance. Staff encourage pupils to be empathetic and to help others. For example, pupils collect for a local food bank and fundraise for various charities. Pupils learn what it means to be a responsible citizen. In 'parliamentary week', for example, they find out about democracy and the rule of law.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, changes to the curriculum are not fully embedded. Staff are still getting used to the new curriculum content. Many subject leaders in these areas are new to role. They are in the process of adapting the curriculum to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that they embed changes to the curriculum and continue to develop the leadership skills of subject leaders.
- In early years, the curriculum for children's development of communication and language is not as strong as in other areas of learning. On occasion, staff lack precision and do not consistently support children's language development. The school should

review this aspect of the curriculum, ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of how to support children's communication and language.

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	117340
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345197
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Campbell Wilson
Headteacher	Fiona Hayes
Website	www.coatesway.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone changes in leadership. The headteacher took up post in September 2022. Two new assistant headteachers were appointed in 2023.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 discussions with the headteacher, both assistant headteachers and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. 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. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 spoke to groups of pupils and staff and evaluated responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and considered responses to the survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

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