

Inspection of Cooks Spinney Primary Academy and Nursery

Cooks Spinney, Harlow, Essex CM20 3BW

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 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

The headteacher of this school is Amber Wade. This school is part of BMAT Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Helena Mills, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Drayton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud to be part of this inclusive community where people respect and care for each other. Positive relationships are central to everything at the school. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), feel included. They actively participate in all aspects of school life.

The school has high expectations for the knowledge and skills pupils will learn. This starts in the early years, where activities are carefully planned to ensure children learn the curriculum well.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. This has a positive effect on their learning. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, they cooperate and take turns, enjoying the range of activities available to them. Bullying is rare and quickly resolved if it happens. Pupils are confident to talk to staff about any concerns they may have. The school provides a nurturing and caring environment in which pupils are safe and happy.

The school has thought carefully about pupils' broader development. For example, pupils enjoy the opportunity to share their thoughts on a topic that is important to them during 'Spinney speaks' assemblies. Pupils are excited to receive achievement rewards every Friday for good work or behaviour linked to the school's values.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and carefully designed. It identifies the important skills and knowledge pupils need to secure. This is taught in a logical order, ensuring that new learning builds on what has gone before. Staff help pupils to remember essential knowledge. They use appropriate assessment strategies to determine what pupils know and can remember. For example, in geography, there are planned opportunities to recap subject-specific vocabulary before introducing new content. In many subjects, teachers model precise language and use questioning successfully to check understanding before moving on to new content. In some parts of the curriculum, however, this is less systematic. As a result, in a small number of subjects, pupils' understanding is less well developed.

The school has high expectations for all pupils to develop as confident, successful learners. The additional needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified. Support given by adults in class meets these needs well. This helps to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well and access the same curriculum as their peers.

The phonics curriculum is taught effectively by well-trained staff. The school ensures that any pupils who are at risk of not keeping up in phonics receive appropriate support to catch up with their peers. Staff ensure that the books pupils read closely match the sounds they know. This helps pupils to read with increasing fluency. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils develop a love of reading.

Most pupils concentrate well in class and respond quickly to teachers' instructions. They are excited to share what they have learned and have positive attitudes to their education. Younger children are supported well to settle into school life and quickly understand the daily routines and expectations of them. The school has recently simplified its behaviour policy so it is clearer to staff, pupils and parents. The school's approach to poor behaviour helps pupils to understand what they may have done wrong.

The school promotes pupils' broader development well. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school offers such as book club, the choir, poetry club and sporting activities. These help pupils to build confidence. Leaders carefully plan educational trips linked to the curriculum, such as to museums, galleries and historic monuments. Pupils learn how to stay safe in different situations, including when online. They know how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to demonstrate their leadership skills, for example through the junior leadership team and acting as class representatives or subject leaders. They carry out their roles diligently and with pride.

The trust has set a clear strategic direction for the school. Knowledgeable members of the local governing board provide highly effective challenge and support to school leaders. Staff feel their workload and well-being have been carefully considered by leaders. They benefit from high-quality professional development, and teachers, and non-teaching support staff, receive excellent support.

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 subjects, pupils' understanding is not systematically checked before new content is introduced. This means pupils sometimes develop a superficial understanding of the key knowledge. The school should ensure that pupils' understanding is routinely checked, and any misconceptions addressed, before introducing new content.
- Some pupils do not develop sufficient enjoyment in reading as they move through the school. This contributes to too few pupils being able to read with confidence by the end of key stage two. The school should ensure that there is sufficient emphasis on developing strong reading habits to help pupils develop the confidence required.

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	140024
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10323737
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Drayton
CEO of the trust	Helena Mills
Headteacher	Amber Wade (Head of School)
Website	www.cooksspinneyacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The head of school was not in school at the time of this inspection. The acting head of school had been in post for four weeks at the time of this inspection.
- The school is part of the BMAT Academies Trust.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club that is run by the school to provide before-school childcare for pupils.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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, history and geography. 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 discussed the curriculum in some 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 scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders’ evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the local governing board. They also spoke with representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including records related to attendance, behaviour and pupil movement.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through their responses to Ofsted’s online surveys.

Inspection team

Robert Grice, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Debbie Rogan

Ofsted Inspector

Ania Vaughan

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024