

# Inspection of Ambler Primary School and Children's Centre

Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 2DR

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Inspection dates:	19 and 20 November 2024
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since May 2017. The school received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act on 8 and 9 March 2023. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are very happy and proud of their school. They cherish all the learning and multiple enrichment activities on offer. Absence rates are exceptionally low. The school is determined to ensure that every pupil can achieve their very best. From the early years upwards, pupils progress extremely well through the curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education, for example, when they move to secondary school.

Pupils and staff enjoy very strong and trustful working relationships. These are established right from the start of the Nursery Year. There is a highly respectful ambiance that permeates across the school. Pupils value interacting with, learning about and celebrating each other's cultures. Pupils have extensive empathy for each other. For example, they are understanding of and supportive to their peers, who may need help with their emotional regulation.

The school provides pupils with a range of leadership opportunities. These include being 'captains', eco-warriors, sports ambassadors and playground buddies. Pupils must apply for these positions. If successful, they attend induction training. These opportunities build pupils' understanding of how to serve the community and what is involved in applying for a job.

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

The school has developed a substantially ambitious curriculum, from the early years to Year 6. Staff, including those who support pupils with SEND, benefit from high-quality support and training. Within this, subject-specific guidance is prioritised, ensuring that teaching of the curriculum matches the school's expectations. The needs of pupils with SEND are clearly identified and met securely. Regular recall activities help pupils to remember key knowledge. Staff check on pupils' understanding often. They quickly address any emerging gaps or misconceptions. As a result, pupils progress exceptionally well through all subject curriculums. They make meaningful links between what they know in different subjects. Their achievement is consistently high.

The school has a relentless focus, from early years onwards, on developing pupils' reading and communication skills, including their vocabulary. Adults in the early years engage children in rich conversations throughout the day. This helps children to expand their vocabulary and develop their language and speaking skills. Across the school, staff encourage pupils to speak up and offer their views. There are well-established procedures to encourage pupils to listen to others and then build on their peers' views. They can also choose to explain why they disagree. The school's work enables pupils to confidently talk about and debate ideas across the subjects.

Pupils become confident and fluent readers. All staff are trained to teach the school's phonics programme well. Effective 'keep-up' sessions provide extra support for pupils who fall behind. They catch up quickly. The school provides bespoke additional phonics

and communication sessions that ensure that pupils with SEND are supported well in their reading development.

The school encourages a love of reading. This includes through regular author visits and reading competitions. Pupils enjoyed nominating their favourite books for the '60 steps, 60 books staircase', with each step displaying a picture of a different book. Teachers make sure that pupils learn plentiful subject-specific vocabulary.

Staff establish clear routines for behaviour, right from the start of Nursery. Children are curious, share well with each other and concentrate hard when engaged in learning activities. Pupils work diligently and are resilient. If they do not get something right, they persevere and learn from their mistakes. Staff teach pupils to recognise and manage their emotions. For example, in every classroom, there is a calm corner. Pupils can independently go there if they need a few minutes to regulate their feelings.

The school carefully plans a coherent and extensive programme of enrichment experiences, including visits, visitors, assemblies and clubs. These deepen pupils' knowledge and broaden their cultural capital. For example, in art and design, every year group visits a different art gallery each year. During art week, the school has an artist in residence to support staff and pupils on specific art-based projects. The annual art exhibition at the school celebrates pupils' achievements, with every child having two pieces of their artwork on display for parents and carers to view. After-school clubs are created in response to pupils' interests, such as sports and street dance. The school teaches pupils about how to form healthy relationships and the concept of consent. Pupils spoke confidently about what this means to them in their daily lives.

Leaders share the view that the well-being of pupils, their families and staff is paramount to ensuring pupils can excel. The school takes great care of the welfare of the pupils, staff and parents. To enhance the education on offer, the school makes extensive links with the community, including local business and other organisations. Parents are full of high praise for the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100397
<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323236
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	449
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Duncan Aldred
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandeep McNicholl
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ambler.islington.sch.uk">www.ambler.islington.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this 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. 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 and history. 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 other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They spoke with the chair of the governing body and other governors. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- 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 documentation, including looking at records of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also had formal meetings with groups of staff and with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. They spoke with parents at the start of the day. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

David Radomsky, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nneoma Thomas	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Rai	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Fenton	Ofsted Inspector

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