

Inspection of Dropmore Infant School

Littleworth Road, Dropmore, Burnham, Berkshire SL1 8PF

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

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

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding 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 February 2012.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils eagerly come to school each day. This school is ambitious for all pupils to do well and achieve their best. Adults set clear expectations for learning. Most pupils rise well to these expectations. They work hard in lessons and achieve well.

Staff provide a warm and nurturing environment where pupils treat each other empathetically. Pupils understand the school's values of independence, curiosity and respect. They show kindness in the way they speak to each other. Staff recognise when pupils display the school's values and celebrate this. Pupils build confidence by sharing their achievements in the weekly celebration assemblies and kindness awards. Pupils feel safe and behave well at this school.

Leadership roles, such as those of playground pals and house captains, help pupils to understand responsibility and how to communicate effectively with each other. Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures. For example, they visit and learn about Sikhism at the local gurdwara. Pupils appreciate the extra opportunities to develop their understanding of the world around them, such as visits to the Natural History Museum and Thames Valley Adventure Playground.

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

Since appointment, the new leadership team has taken decisive steps to strengthen and improve the school. Along with governors, leaders have a strong understanding of the school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the changes made. The new curriculum has been skilfully developed to provide pupils with the ambitious knowledge that they need, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Learning builds pupils' knowledge from early years to Year 2. In every subject, there is an increased focus on pupils learning to write well. This means that pupils are now writing with greater complexity and accuracy.

Staff's subject knowledge is secure. They identify and address pupils' misconceptions or misunderstandings in lessons very well. Leaders ensure that they identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately and that teachers adapt the curriculum effectively for these pupils. This includes working closely with external agencies to draw on their expertise. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well as they progress through the curriculum.

In subjects such as mathematics and reading, the curriculum is well established. Teachers know what they need to teach and design learning to help pupils achieve ambitious outcomes. Teachers check that pupils remember important knowledge and skills before moving on to new ideas. As a result, pupils achieve well in these subjects. However, in more recently developed subjects, time is needed to see the impact of the new curriculum on developing pupils' knowledge further. Therefore, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

The school prioritises reading. In Reception, children start learning phonics straight away. Close monitoring and daily extra support help weaker readers catch up if they need to. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, quickly become fluent and confident readers. The strong phonics outcomes at the end of Year 1 reflect the effective teaching of reading in the school.

Children flourish in Reception. The school has identified precisely what children will learn and when in order to be ready for Year 1. Highly skilled staff support children to understand and remember knowledge over time. Extremely effective activity choices help develop children's knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. For example, the literacy support programme used by the school encourages children to develop their writing. Consequently, pupils are now writing with more confidence and accuracy.

Pupils understand the routines and rules of the school. Consequently, most lessons are calm places where pupils learn well. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and want to do their very best. However, there are times when a few pupils are less focused on their learning. Leaders are aware of this and support staff to be more consistent when implementing the school's behaviour policy.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Leaders ensure that there is a wealth of well-planned trips and opportunities to engage actively with the local community. Pupils put their learning into practice outside the classroom very effectively. For example, pupils visit the local riding school for disabled pupils to develop a deep understanding about inclusion and what it means to be different. Pupils also take part in the annual country dancing festival hosted by the school. This helps pupils to communicate and be part of the local community.

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 is not yet securely and consistently showing a positive impact in all subjects. This means that pupils are not always confident in recalling and using knowledge and skills. The school should continue to embed the curriculum so that all pupils acquire the knowledge that they need in readiness for the next stage of their education.

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	110223
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10296153
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tim Wicks
Headteacher	Nicky Waugh and Amy Douglas (Co-headteachers)
Website	https://dropmoreinfant.eschools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 February 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The co-headteachers were appointed in September 2023.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized infant school.
- This school has before- and after-school provision provided by school staff.
- The school does not currently 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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing board.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and looked at writing across the curriculum.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing board meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

Inspection team

Neil Pilsworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tracey Brunton

Ofsted Inspector

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