Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Robert Blair School and Children's Centre

Brewery Road, Islington, London N7 9QJ

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

Robert Blair School and Children's Centre has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be members of this diverse school community. They are safe and happy and know that staff listen to them. They can name a trusted adult they would speak to if they have any concerns.

The school has high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and provides an ambitious curriculum. The school is determined to tailor learning to the needs of its pupils. Pupils enjoy school and are supported, both personally and academically, to achieve well.

In lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. Clear routines and expectations are in place to support this. Pupils are polite and helpful. They are focused on their work and are keen to answer questions. Relationships are very positive, and adults encourage and support pupils.

The school provides access to a range of wider opportunities to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to think 'The school is our classroom; London is our school.' There are after-school clubs with activities such as football, gardening, and crochet. Pupils visit places such as museums, art galleries and the local town hall. The school works with different agencies to provide enriching experiences such as music composition, dance projects and local school sports tournaments.

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

The school has constructed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and present subject matter clearly and effectively in class.

There is a strong focus on learning to read as soon as pupils start at the school. In Nursery, this includes listening to stories and rhymes. From Reception, pupils build on this with daily phonics lessons. Pupils who fall behind receive extra support which helps them to catch up. They read books matched to the sounds they know. Older pupils discuss enthusiastically their enjoyment of reading, including the impact of an engaging plot and the power of a suspenseful ending.

Learning is cleverly designed. Topics and themes are linked, including through the use of resources. This is so pupils can connect their learning. For example, in early years, children learn about different toys in history but are also able to use those toys in their imaginative play, by pretending to buy and sell them in the shop corner. Pupils remember, discuss, and apply previous learning confidently. For example, when beginning to study the Romans, pupils tried to predict the ways they might be similar to the ancient Greeks.

Pupils with SEND are well served by staff's delivery of the curriculum. They are helped to access learning by being in different groups matched to their level, but also through using visual and concrete resources and targeted support from staff. The school has an in-house provision, where pupils with greater levels of need may go to access more tailored support for part of the school day.

Teachers check and promptly address pupils' misconceptions and errors in English and mathematics. They helpfully adjust their teaching to break down knowledge to support pupils' understanding. However, in some other subjects, methods for checking what pupils know and can do are less developed. In these subjects, pupils' misconceptions are sometimes missed, and they do not develop a secure and deep understanding.

Pupils' attendance is improving. Staff work in a multitude of ways with those families whose children do not attend school regularly. Pupils are also offered rewards for good attendance such as class awards in a weekly assembly.

Pupils behave well in the school and look after one another. Staff consistently deliver the school's behaviour policy. Pupils clearly understand what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. They know that, if there is an issue, staff will help them deal with it.

The school provides an impressive range of experiences to support pupils' wider development. Pupils contribute to the local community, for example by reading poetry at the area's local festival. Pupils also help out in the school community, for example by being lunchtime monitors or being part of the school council.

Leaders work hard to sustain and improve the school's performance in all areas. Staff are positive about the school. They appreciate the training they receive and support and advice from their colleagues. The majority think that their workload and well-being are

taken into consideration. Governors are proud of the school's polite and friendly pupils. They are always ready to question leaders in meetings to ensure that the quality of education in the school remains high.

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, assessment is not used effectively to check what pupils learn and remember. In these instances, pupils do not consistently develop the same depth of knowledge and understanding as they do in other subjects. The school should ensure that assessment is used consistently well across the curriculum to identify any errors or misconceptions in pupils' learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	100422
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10345647
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	0 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Convery
Headteacher	Michelle Bahn
Website	www.robertblairschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. They also held meetings with the members of the governing body.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys completed by parents, pupils, and staff.

Inspection team

Eleanor Ross, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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