

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Richard Cobden Primary School

Camden Street, London NW1 0LL

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Inspection dates:

17 and 18 December 2024

## **Outcome**

Richard Cobden Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

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

Pupils at Richard Cobden Primary School are happy in a safe and nurturing environment. Pupils typically behave well and get along with each other. Bullying is rare, and pupils know that staff listen to any concerns they may have.

Pupils benefit from a range of wider experiences. Pupils develop their talents and interests by attending different clubs such as coding, choir and gardening. Boys and girls can extend their sporting abilities through different local leagues, including hockey and football. Pupils take on responsibilities to contribute to the wider school community, for example, as playground buddies, prefects or school council members. Pupils enjoy visits to local sites, including The Crick Institute and the Natural History Museum. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. They understand the safe use of online media and learn about different ways to use their talents in future careers they might pursue.

The school has created a caring community where pupils are supported to achieve their goals. The school has high expectations for pupils, and pupils achieve well by the time they leave, supporting them to be successful in their next stage of education.

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

There is a sharp focus on communication and language. Beginning in early years, the school has prioritised the consistent teaching of routines for discussion, practising whole sentences and new vocabulary. This means pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language, benefit from a language-rich environment. Staff are appropriately

trained to deliver the school's phonics curriculum. Books are well matched to the sounds pupils know. While published outcomes for the previous Year 1 phonics screening check are low, leaders have further prioritised communication and language for pupils who need the most support to keep up and catch up.

Systems for identifying pupils' additional needs are well established. This means teachers adjust their teaching appropriately when needed. Pupils who receive some of their curriculum in the 'honeysuckle' room are helped to develop their understanding towards ambitious goals.

The school has designed a curriculum that aligns with what is expected nationally. This is thought out in a logical order so pupils return to key ideas over time. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum is at the earlier stages of design and implementation. In these instances, curriculum thinking does not provide sufficient clarity for staff on which concepts pupils need to secure before moving on to more complex tasks. This means pupils are not consistently supported in making links between their learning or producing work demonstrating their understanding.

Pupils behave well, and learning is rarely disrupted. There are respectful and courteous relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils enjoy being rewarded for their positive conduct, such as through certificates and assemblies. Some pupils take this further by serving as playground buddies to welcome new pupils to the school. In the playground, some pupils struggle to manage their behaviour. While a small number of incidents are reviewed, expectations of pupils' behaviour outside lessons are not as consistent. Pupils attend well. The school makes attendance a high priority, such as through assemblies and rewards. The school listens and engages closely with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance.

Pupils' wider development is well considered. Pupils learn about staying safe, physically and mentally. They learn how to raise concerns, for example, about a peer's mental health. Pupils understand the signs, including non-verbal cues, if a friend needs support. As with a few subjects in the curriculum, there are some concepts in the personal, social and health education programme that pupils are not as secure in because teaching has not provided sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' understanding.

Staff feel supported by leaders and that their workload is considered. The school ensures that the well-being of staff is taken into account. Leaders and those responsible for governance work well with the local community, including parents. One parent, representing the views of many, emphasised the community feel of the school. Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties and have managed the school effectively during a period of transition.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum is at the earlier stages of development. In these instances, there is insufficient clarity on the important concepts to be taught. This means some teaching does not build effectively on what pupils have learned previously. As a result, some pupils struggle to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas. The school should ensure the knowledge pupils need to learn and remember is clarified. They should also continue to review the curriculum implementation, ensuring pupils deepen their understanding over time.
- At times, pupils' behaviour in the playground is inconsistently managed. This means some pupils are unclear about the expectations of them and how any incidents that arise will be addressed. The school should ensure the approach to managing behaviour outside the classroom is consistently implemented.

## 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 outstanding 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in October 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

|                                            |                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 100022                                                                   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Camden                                                                   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10345615                                                                 |
| <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> | 378                                                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                       |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Deborah Isaacs                                                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Ruby Nasser (Executive Headteacher)<br>Scarlett Cookson (Head of School) |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.rcobden.camden.sch.uk">www.rcobden.camden.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 16 and 17 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005        |

## Information about this school

- In September 2024, a new executive headteacher and head of school were appointed. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other school in a local partnership.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

## 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.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.

She also spoke with the local authority school improvement partner.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and leaders, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- 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 scrutinised a range of documentation provided by leaders, including about their priorities for improvement.
- The inspector considered the views of parents, pupils and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Matea Marcinko, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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