

Inspection of a good school: Edith Cavell Primary School

Manton Lane, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 7NH

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024, and 24 September 2024

Outcome

Edith Cavell Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy learning. Their individual needs, both academic and emotional, are known and well catered for. Staff work hard to engage all families, including through language translation applications when necessary.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement in core subjects, such as English and mathematics. This includes for those pupils new to speaking English. The wider curriculum is thoughtfully planned and taught. It is broad and interesting, enhanced by visits and expert visitors. Pupils know what is expected because teachers use a common approach to teaching. Pupils who need it get extra support from skilled staff, both in class and small groups.

Pupils' behaviour is commendable. Respect and tolerance are evident in all relationships. Everyone is kept safe. There is a culture of vigilance. Parents and carers are positive about the school and their children's education. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school, their lessons and the wider opportunities provided. Older pupils successfully organise and run sports sessions for younger pupils. Pupils demonstrate high levels of confidence, for example, during performances.

Lunch and breaktimes are opportunities to socialise. Pupils chat and play together. These busy, yet orderly, times provide an opportunity to enjoy healthy lunches and sports activities.

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

The school's curriculum is planned carefully and regularly reviewed to see if it can be improved further. Teachers consider how to best help pupils to progress through the curriculum in each subject. They also focus on pupils developing subject-specific vocabulary. Leaders provide support, guidance and training for staff so that there is a common approach to teaching. Pupils' achievement in national test and assessments in English and mathematics is improving steadily. Most pupils make strong progress through

the curriculum, although some pupils have the potential to achieve even more. At times, they sit and wait for other pupils to finish work. Teachers do not always spot this and help pupils to deepen their learning.

Reading has a high priority. Investment in books and the library ensure that pupils can access high-quality texts. Daily phonics sessions for younger pupils, following a recognised scheme, ensure consistency of teaching and progress. Pupils who struggle with reading have effective catch-up sessions. They demonstrate confidence and enthusiasm when reading new books.

Pupils' written work does not always reflect the high standards of handwriting or presentation outlined in school policies. There are not common expectations for writing. Some pupils have not learned basic writing skills. This means their letter and number formation and pencil grip are often poor. This slows pupils down and affects the quality of their work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well. There is a strong, well-trained team in place. As pupils join the school, they are assessed and any specific needs identified. Support in class, and through targeted additional help, ensures that most pupils with SEND achieve well.

Staff provide a safe, interesting and inviting range of learning activities, both indoors and outside, for children in the early years. Children enjoy throwing, catching, playing musical instruments and climbing outdoors. They enjoy these opportunities while developing important skills. Relationships are strong and supportive. Skilled adults encourage language and vocabulary development and support children in learning numbers.

The school gives attendance and punctuality a high priority. A range of rewards and sanctions are in place to support this. As a result, pupils' attendance is improving. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes, both in lessons and around school, are exemplary. Pupils are encouraged and expected to show responsibility and respect. Lessons are orderly and any disruption is rare.

Pupils enjoy a broad and interesting range of opportunities beyond the curriculum. They appreciate the visits, visitors and practical, interactive activities that enhance what they learn in class. Everyone can participate in these through support from the school, if needed. A range of before- and after-school clubs is on offer, including a daily breakfast club. These are well attended and enjoyed by many pupils. However, fewer pupils with SEND participate in these clubs currently, so some do not benefit from what is on offer.

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. They learn about values such as democracy and visit different places of worship in the local community. This encourages tolerance, understanding and acceptance. Pupils are keen to share and explain what they have learned from these visits.

School leaders have positive relationships with all staff. They consider staff workload and well-being. Tests and assessments are planned to avoid busy times. Staff appreciate this. Knowledgeable, committed governors support and challenge leaders effectively.

Governors have been instrumental in attracting funding to enhance provision at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not always provide pupils with suitably demanding work and do not move learning on quickly for some pupils. As a result, some pupils do not gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that they could. The school should ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations for all pupils.
- Fewer pupils with SEND access the wide range of extra-curricular clubs provided for pupils. Some pupils with SEND, therefore, miss out on valuable additional experiences. The school should review its strategies to support more pupils with SEND to access and benefit from the school's wider opportunities offer.
- Staff do not have a consistent and rigorous approach to the teaching of writing skills. As a result, pupils do not develop writing fluency and stamina. The school should ensure that staff implement its policies and approaches to handwriting and presentation consistently in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in 2014.

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

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| Unique reference number | 109433 |
| Local authority | Bedford |
| Inspection number | 10323590 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 295 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Gillian Bishop |
| Headteacher | Heather Cooke |
| Website | www.edithcavellprimary.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Leap Trust. This is a group of three primary schools within the local area that work together and support each other.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school offers before- and after-school provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspection started on 9 July 2024. Inspectors returned on 24 September 2024 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.

- The inspectors met with: the headteacher; assistant headteacher; subject leaders for English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE); the local authority school improvement partner; and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Deep dives were carried out in early reading and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, examined curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the wider curriculum in other subjects, such as PSHE. An inspector also observed sports day activities.
- The inspectors visited the early years provision.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents through responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's surveys, as well as through discussions conducted during the inspection.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jacqueline Bell-Cook

Ofsted Inspector

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