

# Inspection of Abacus Belsize Primary School

Jubilee Waterside Centre, 105 Camley Street, London N1C 4PF

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Inspection dates:	3 and 4 June 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</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

The headteacher of this school is Melissa Chandler. This school is part of Anthem Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, David Moran, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jay Bhutani.

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 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this inclusive school. There are warm and nurturing relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils are safe and well cared for. The school prides itself on giving pupils the opportunities to thrive. Staff encourage pupils to be honest and resilient. Pupils work together very well and highly value the immense sense of community at the school.

Pupils are eager to live up to the high expectations the school has for them. They achieve well in a wide range of subjects. Pupils have an enthusiasm for learning. They work hard and are proud of their work.

Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary. The atmosphere is superb, and pupils are highly attentive in lessons. Pupils treat each other with kindness and consideration. They look after each other and make sure everyone feels valued.

The school places a high importance on pupils learning to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They have a strong awareness of how to stay safe online. Pupils are keen to take on leadership responsibilities. These include being on the school council, lunchtime monitors and playground leaders. Pupils appreciate the clubs they can attend, such as art club, football clubs and mindfulness workshops.

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

The school has designed an ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum for all ages and subjects. This starts from the exceptional early years provision. The curriculum sets out in detail the knowledge and skills pupils will learn. In the Reception Year, the environment is calm and promoting children's work with numbers, letters and painting. This stimulates and supports children's learning. Staff enable children to talk about and practise their early mathematics, language and expressive art skills. Children in early years and throughout the school are well prepared for their next stages of learning.

Staff have secure subject knowledge and present new learning clearly. In most cases teachers make checks and correct what knowledge and skills pupils are learning. Where this is most effective, it helps the school to refine and adjust what is taught next. However, sometimes, these checks do not accurately identify if pupils have fully understood a subject or task. When this happens, misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge can persist.

The school places high importance on supporting pupils to communicate with confidence. From the moment they start school, children begin to learn to read. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. The school identifies pupils who may be falling behind in their reading. Extra reading support is provided so that these pupils quickly catch up. As a result, by the time they get to Year 2, almost all pupils in this school are confident and fluent readers. Older pupils speak about their love of reading. They enjoy a wide range of diverse texts and books, including poetry, fiction and non-fiction.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified quickly. Staff are well trained to support pupils with SEND. The school works closely with other agencies, such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. This helps to ensure pupils receive the right support. Staff make thoughtful adaptations to their teaching. This means pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. They achieve well.

Behaviour is exemplary in classrooms and at playtimes. Pupils of all ages play happily together and enjoy a wide range of fun activities. The school maintains strong oversight of pupils' attendance and attendance is high.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school identifies and addresses the social and emotional needs of each pupil effectively. Regular visits to places of worship, museums and galleries enhance pupils' wider development and independence. The school prepares pupils extremely well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a deep understanding of fundamental British Values. They demonstrate their understanding of them by the way they display tolerance and respect towards others.

Leaders and those responsible for governance put the interests of families and pupils at the centre of their decisions. This reinforces the community ethos of the school. The trust has an extremely strong oversight of the school's work and strategic direction. Members of the trust provide a highly effective level of support and challenge. For example, through providing regular high-quality opportunities for staff training and development. School leaders are considerate of the well-being and workload of staff, who are proud to work at the school. Parents and carers value the school and praise the staff and school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Sometimes the checks on pupils' understanding do not accurately identify what pupils have understood. This means that on occasion, errors and misconceptions are not identified and addressed. This hinders some pupils' learning. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise to check pupils' learning accurately and adapt their approaches to address any gaps or misconceptions accordingly.

## 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>	139837
<b>Local authority</b>	Camden
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379150
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jay Bhutani
<b>Interim CEO of the trust</b>	David Moran
<b>Headteacher</b>	Melissa Chandler
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.abacus.anthemtrust.uk/">www.abacus.anthemtrust.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 May 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is part of Anthem Schools Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in December 2023.
- In 2015 the school moved to this current site on a temporary basis from Belsize Park. It is looking to relocate back to its school catchment area.
- The school runs after-school clubs on the school premises.
- 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. 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 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.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior and curriculum leaders and groups of staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of trustees, the director of education and associate director of education of Anthem Schools Trust. He also met with a representative of the Anthem Community Council.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View. They considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- 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 school documents, including those relating to governance, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' strategies for improvement and their assessment of the school's effectiveness.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaktimes, in the dining hall and on the playground.

### **Inspection team**

Sean Flood, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Deborah Walters

His Majesty's Inspector

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