

# South Benfleet Primary School

High Road, Benfleet, Essex SS7 5HA

**Inspection dates** 17–18 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good academy

- Leaders and the governing body provide good leadership. They are passionate about their academy and ensure that almost all pupils make good progress.
- Senior leaders and governors monitor teaching rigorously and provide very effective professional development for all staff. Consequently, teaching is good over time and an increasing proportion of teaching is outstanding.
- Pupil outcomes are good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is above the national average.
- All adults are ambitious for the academy and its pupils. Senior leaders are highly committed to making further improvements. They act as excellent role models for pupils. Teachers make suggestions as to how pupils can improve their work and pupils respond very positively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very effectively. The developing curriculum is stimulating and enriched with a variety of visits, visitors and clubs to encourage pupils to have a clear understanding of the part they play in the local and wider community.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is highly effective. All members of staff receive regular safeguarding training and know precisely what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Consequently, all pupils feel safe because they trust adults to help them.
- Outstanding leadership and management of the early years has ensured that the learning environment is exciting and stimulating, that the curriculum is rich and varied and that teaching is consistently high quality. As a result, more children achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year than nationally and progress of the vast majority of children is good.

### It is not yet an outstanding academy because

- Not enough pupils throughout the academy make more than expected progress in writing and mathematics.
- The sharing of outstanding practice to improve pupils' outcomes is still developing.
- The most-able pupils are not challenged as much as they could be. There are not enough opportunities for these pupils to develop their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.

## Full report

### What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of pupils making good or better progress by:
  - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching within the academy
  - planning opportunities for the most-able pupils to practise and develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Ensure leaders build on the effectiveness of systems introduced to improve pupils' outcomes by checking that the academy's new assessment policy is implemented by all staff making the very best use of the existing outstanding practice in the academy.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior leaders and governors provide good leadership. They provide a good education for their pupils and serve their community well. They have engendered a culture which places self-belief and perseverance at the heart of the academy.
- Leaders rigorously monitor pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching. As a result, they know their academy very well and have correctly identified the priorities for improvement. The academy's plans for improvement are clear and leaders regularly track progress with governors to ensure that there is no slippage in intended outcomes.
- Actions that leaders have taken since the last inspection have secured continued improvement. As a result of their aspiration for all teaching to be good, if not outstanding, they have used some expertise within the academy very effectively. Professional development is provided where any gaps are noted in teachers' skills or understanding. This has contributed to the rise in outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 to above average in 2015.
- Funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is effectively spent. Through thorough monitoring and assessment, pupils are given timely and targeted support to ensure that they make the very best progress they can. Pupils make particularly good use of the popular 'Rainbow Club' to which all disadvantaged pupils are automatically members. This well-resourced room is regularly used and is a place, as one boy said, 'you can go to calm down and play games if you are having a problem'. This facility and targeted additional teaching have contributed to the narrowing of the gap in achievement between this group of pupils and their peers.
- The academy is making good use of the additional funding for sports. Staff report that it is aiding their knowledge and skills in many areas and is having an impact on pupils' well-being. A sports specialist has provided gymnastics and games, both of which are proving to be very popular with pupils. The number of pupils who take part in competitive sport and extra-curricular activities is increasing and the academy is very successful in its many competitions with other schools.
- The new curriculum successfully blends the local area with that which is further afield. For example, the academy will shortly be celebrating its 90th year. It is already planned for pupils to write to the Queen, whose 90th birthday is also imminent. Subject leaders are actively involved in promoting their area of the curriculum, ensuring that what is taught across the academy is building on pupils' learning and is also exciting. The theme 'Brilliant Benfleet' is used well to teach the history of the local area. Pupils enjoy this thematic approach.
- Pupils say that they have learned a lot about how democracy and the values of respect and tolerance ensure a 'friendly and kind school'. Pupils spoke animatedly about the school election that was held at the same time as the country's general election. After a presentation to the school of each pupil's manifesto, a selection was made. The pupil had tea with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to put forward their manifesto which was then acted upon.
- **The governance of the academy**
  - Governors have a very good understanding of the quality of education provided by the academy. They know about the quality of teaching in the academy because they meet with leaders and visit the academy regularly. They work closely with academy leaders at all levels to ensure they understand and are aware of pupils' progress.
  - Governors have a good range of skills that benefit the academy. They have specific responsibilities linked to particular areas of the curriculum or aspects of the academy's work. This in-depth knowledge has enabled them to drive improvement in partnership with academy leaders.
  - The governing body has prioritised funding for the Early Years Foundation Stage unit which has clearly enhanced the learning of the very youngest children in the academy. Governors have ensured that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is effectively spent. They regularly check on how this funding and additional sports funding is supporting pupils' development.
  - Governors have a clear understanding of the link between teachers' salary progression and pupils' progress. Governors ensure that the headteacher's performance management and teachers' appraisal are carried out.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders ensure that all staff are fully trained and clearly understand their responsibilities. They also carry out rigorous checks on all adults to ensure they are suitably qualified and safe to work with pupils.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching over time is good. The strength of the good relationships between adults and pupils is clearly evident in all classes. Lessons are well organised and interesting. Teachers use the skills of learning support assistants very effectively to support pupils. As a result, the large majority of individual pupils and groups make at least expected progress from their starting points and a good proportion make better than expected progress.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective. Consequently, almost all pupils make the progress expected in these subjects compared to pupils nationally. However, there is some inconsistency in a small minority of classes where current pupils' progress is slower in mathematics and writing.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that words make) is very effective and pupils use these skills well when reading. However, they are not as adept at using their phonic skills when writing. As a consequence, pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 1 is less than in reading and mathematics.
- The majority of adults have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. However, where expectations are not as high, pupils make less progress than they could, particularly the most-able pupils in writing and mathematics. Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching over time evidences that teachers plan learning that supports the needs of the majority of pupils. Some of the most-able pupils, however, say that they find the work in some lessons does not challenge them enough.
- Teachers use the academy's marking and feedback system well to help pupils to improve or to encourage them to think carefully about their work. Pupils say that this helps them and they respond well to comments using the academy's popular 'tickled pink, green for growth' system. Books show that this is challenging pupils to be independent in their learning and is working particularly effectively in upper Key Stage 2.
- There is some outstanding practice in teachers' use of questioning to gauge pupils' understanding. This is used well to adapt teaching, challenge some pupils and guide others to a better understanding. However, in some lessons, assessment information is not used well enough to match work to pupils' needs. Not all classes, for example, have the opportunity to select the level of challenge that they feel best suits them. This is something that experienced teachers are trialling and pupils say they would welcome in all lessons.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to use the skills they learn in writing and mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. However, this is not consistently applied in all classes or, for example, in all subjects, like science.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The academy's culture actively promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Systems for safeguarding are very thorough and leaders are determined to ensure all pupils are well cared for and that all staff and external personnel fulfil their responsibilities.
- All pupils feel safe at all times. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including using the internet and mobile phones. They trust adults will listen to them and will quickly take effective action to address their concerns.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of all the different forms of bullying and agree that bullying is very rare. When pupils were asked about racial bullying, their response was emphatic: 'We don't have that here. Everyone is accepted equally.'
- Through excellent role modelling, staff have taught the majority of pupils how to be effective learners. There is clear consistency in what is displayed in each class to support learners and pupils use these prompts well. There is a culture of risk-taking and learning from failure. As a result, pupils enjoy trying something new even if they are 'a bit nervous about trying it', firmly believing that, if they try their best, they will be successful eventually.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has equipped them with an excellent understanding of equality and what it means. Pupils devised and voted for the academy's motto, 'smile, believe, persevere, succeed', and this ethos is evident in everything that pupils do. They enjoy coming to school where learning is fun and exciting. They have a keen sense of what their education can do to support them; as one boy put it, 'wherever my life takes me'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is because pupils know what is acceptable and the consequences if they do not adhere to the academy rules which are widely displayed around the academy.
- Pupils take pride in their work and are enthusiastic to learn in lessons. As a consequence, behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about their learning and the opportunities they have to learn new and exciting things. One pupil animatedly spoke about the recent 'Viking Day' where pupils experienced what it was like to dress and behave like a Viking. One pupil asked the inspector, 'Did you know that the best sword the Vikings had was very heavy but bendy too so it wouldn't break?'
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the academy and at breaktimes. Expectations from all adults are high and pupils respond politely and courteously to others. Pupils work well together and many are developing a good level of independence in their work. Occasions of poor behaviour are extremely rare.
- Pupils are very proud of their academy. They undertake additional responsibilities with a keen sense of achievement. 'I like being a play leader as I can look back and say I am proud of what I did.'
- Leaders have ensured that attendance continues to rise. Pupils arrive on time ready for lessons and are competitive about which class will win the attendance award each week.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From their starting points on entry to the academy, pupils make good progress overall by the time they leave Key Stage 2. More pupils now make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the academy. The proportion of the most-able pupils making good progress in writing is below the national average.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics and many make more than expected progress. There is some inconsistency between Year 1 and Year 2 particularly in writing. The academy's own assessment information shows that, currently, the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is rising in Key Stage 2. However, the most-able pupils are not making as much progress as they should be.
- Pupils' attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2 has improved consistently since the last inspection and is now significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has also consistently risen and is above the national average in 2015.
- The vast majority of disadvantaged pupils currently at the academy are making good progress. The proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 in 2015 was too small to comment on. Disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 1 did not attain as well as their peers in the academy. However, their progress is good from their various starting points.
- Overall, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making at least expected progress, with many making more than expected progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are well-prepared for their next stage in education, be it from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2.

## Early years provision

is outstanding

- Outstanding leadership and management have secured outstanding outcomes for the vast majority of children in almost all areas of learning. The quality of teaching over time is outstanding and never less than good. Teachers ensure that their teaching and the support children receive from the early years staff is highly responsive to children's needs.
- The early years team works closely with parents and, as a result, children thrive.
- Children enter the early years with levels of development that are largely typical for their age. All children, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the academy receives additional funding and the most able, make good progress in relation to their starting points. As a consequence, at the end of Reception Year, more children attain a good level of development than nationally. Children are therefore very well prepared for Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into Reception and are keen to join in. They demonstrate curiosity, imagination and sustained interest in the activities they choose or are directed to by staff. This is because teachers talk with children about what they like to do and are interested in. Learning is then planned to incorporate their interests and builds effectively on what children already know. As a result, children listen and

respond well to adults and other children. Children are exceptionally well behaved, work and play well together and are kept safe.

- The early years environment is bright, highly stimulating and very well organised across all areas of the curriculum. Leaders constantly adapt the resources and activities in response to regular and accurate assessments. For example, leaders recognised the need to provide even more opportunities for boys to develop their creative skills. As a result, the outside area has been developed to incorporate even more creative activities. Inspectors saw that there was no difference between the activities that boys or girls chose to do and all children were keen to say what they 'are learning'.
- The early years team and parents work effectively to support the children in their learning. Parents are very happy with the early years provision. They value the communication they have with all of the staff. One parent commented, 'I love the end-of-week reports of what the children have learnt and what they are going to learn the following week'.

## Academy details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137029
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001525

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Canon Eileen French
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dominic Carver
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 793276
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.southbenfleet.essex.sch.uk">www.southbenfleet.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@southbenfleet.essex.sch.uk">admin@southbenfleet.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 December 2011

## Information about this academy

- This academy is larger than the average primary.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium (which is additional government funding used to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- In 2015, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An independent playgroup is accommodated on the academy site. This is inspected separately.
- The academy is a founder member of the Benfleet and Thundersley Inter Cluster and a member of the Thames Primary Consortium (a school-based teacher training organisation).

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons.
- Inspectors heard some pupils read from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two members of the governing body, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a range of evidence, including the academy's self-evaluation and development plans, the systems to track pupils' progress and policies and records relating to behaviour and attendance. They also looked at records of the monitoring of teaching by senior staff, performance management information, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils' work.
- The Parent View online survey response of 61 parents was taken into account together with the views of those who spoke to inspectors during the school day.
- Six responses from the staff survey were also examined and recorded.

## Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Anne Hookway

Lesley Stevens

Heather Hann

Elizabeth Chaplin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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