

# Inspection of a good school: River Beach Primary School

York Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 6EW

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Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

## **Outcome**

River Beach Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils love their school, telling us, for example, that, 'It's not good; it's fabulous.' They behave very well, work hard and try their best. They are curious, confident learners. Pupils are kind to each other. They understand that everyone is different, and they respect this. Pupils are confident that bullying is extremely rare in their school and inspectors agree.

Staff have very high aspirations for all pupils. Leaders are passionate that their school serves the local community well. They diligently ensure that pupils are given the best opportunity to succeed in life. High expectations of what pupils can achieve are at the heart of everything the school does.

This is a caring, nurturing school. Pupils and their families appreciate the warm, friendly atmosphere. Parents are glad that leaders have an open door policy. Pupils enjoy the fact that all staff are fully involved in the everyday life of the school.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about the wealth of opportunities. They enjoy a variety of clubs, including choir, sports and circus skills. They spoke excitedly about an upcoming visit to parliament and a charity 'danceathon'. Pupils are working hard on their school production, in which everyone is welcome to take part.

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

Pupils enjoy high-quality learning across a full range of subjects. Ambitious leaders have made sure that the curriculum is carefully planned. Staff ensure that teaching builds on pupils' prior knowledge effectively. For example, in art, pupils develop their sketching skills well. As they get older, they learn more complex techniques and their drawings improve. Across the curriculum, teachers quickly identify pupils who are struggling. These pupils receive appropriate support, which helps them to succeed.

Teaching is interesting and engaging. On the whole, extra adults support pupils' learning

skilfully. For example, children in the early years were happily throwing hoops into numbered squares. Staff were supporting them ably to count the hoops accurately. However, the quality of the support provided by additional adults does vary at times. Leaders are aware of this, and training is having a positive impact on staff skills.

Some of the most able pupils do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable. Leaders have begun to address the lack of challenge in some teaching for these pupils. This is now improving.

Pupils love reading. Pupils and staff talk excitedly about the wide range of books they are reading and sharing in school. Pupils benefit hugely from the well-stocked, well-cared-for library. They use this calm, inviting space regularly, including before school. Pupils independently choose books which accurately match their reading level. They do this easily because of the school's clear system. Teaching pupils to read begins as soon as they join the nursery or Reception. On the whole, phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught well. Early years staff provide clear and helpful guidance to parents, for example through useful videos which explain phonics sounds and signs. These help parents to reinforce their child's learning at home. Some phonics teaching is not effective for the most able pupils. At times, these pupils' progress slows, while they have to wait for others to catch up. This hinders their progress.

Staff teach pupils to be thoughtful, reflective young people. Pupils learn how to contribute meaningfully to their community, for example through being 'house ambassadors'. School councillors proudly told me that they are 'the voice for the school'. Weekly 'lessons in life' teach pupils useful skills, such as understanding body language. Peer mediators help other pupils to sort out any difficulties with each other. Staff teach all pupils about empathy and managing their own emotions, including through engaging activities, such as an early morning check on how pupils are feeling today.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve their potential. Staff thoughtfully adapt the curriculum where necessary. Highly-skilled inclusion leaders monitor extra support carefully. This support has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Staff support deaf pupils successfully to develop a positive deaf identity. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of the school.

The trustees are very knowledgeable. They have an accurate understanding of the school. They provide helpful advice and support to leaders. Leaders have recently improved the way teachers plan lessons and assess pupils. This has also reduced teachers' workload. Staff appreciate how much leaders listen to them and value their opinions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have an in-depth knowledge of how to keep pupils safe. They know pupils and their families extremely well. The pastoral leader pursues support needed for families with tenacity. She ensures that external agencies communicate effectively with each other, school and families. Communication between staff is very strong. The required

employment checks are carried out reliably.

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

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

- The majority of staff lead and support pupils' learning effectively. However, the recognised need to develop staff skills for teaching phonics means that, currently, pupils learn in larger groups than leaders intend. As a result, the most able pupils are not able to learn at a suitably fast pace. Leaders need to ensure that staff skills relating to the teaching of phonics develop rapidly so that teaching can be better organised to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Most pupils learn well over time, successfully building their knowledge. However, some of the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they can. Leaders understand that more of these pupils should be reaching higher standards by the time they leave for secondary school. Leaders need to ensure that these pupils are challenged sufficiently across the curriculum so that they achieve higher standards.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged River Beach Primary School to be good on 3–4 October 2012.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140089
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111338
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	673
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Susan Hawthorn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dave Ayers
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.riverbeach.w-sussex.sch.uk">www.riverbeach.w-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 March 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Schoolsworks Academy Trust. The trust has 6 other primary/junior schools. It is the largest primary sector multi-academy trust in West Sussex.
- The head of school has been in post since September 2017. He was previously the deputy head of school.
- The school has a special support centre for deaf pupils. The centre caters for up to 14 pupils, all with education, health and care plans. These pupils learn alongside their hearing peers in the main school. They also receive extra support in the centre.

## Information about this inspection

- We met with the head of school, the deputy head of school and the assistant head of school. We also met with leaders responsible for phonics, mathematics, art, the early years foundation stage, special educational needs and the lead teacher for deaf pupils. We met with trustees, including the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and the director for teaching and learning.
- Subjects we considered closely were reading, mathematics and art. In each subject, we had discussions with leaders, teachers and pupils, we visited lessons with leaders, and

we looked at pupils' work.

- We looked carefully at safeguarding. This involved speaking to pupils, staff, parents and trustees. We looked at records and documentation. We also looked at the school's single central record, which contains details of checks carried out on all adults.
- We spoke to pupils, teachers and teaching assistants to hear their views of their school. We considered 66 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted's Parent View, including 66 free-text responses. We considered the views of 306 pupils and 57 staff who completed the Ofsted surveys. We observed the behaviour of pupils in the lunch hall and the playground.

### **Inspection team**

Maxine McDonald-Taylor, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz McIntosh

Ofsted Inspector

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