

Inspection of a good school: Benfield Primary School

255 Old Shoreham Road, Portslade, Brighton, East Sussex BN41 1XS

Inspection dates:

20–21 November 2019

Outcome

Benfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils study interesting topics, which they say help them learn. For example, pupils learn about Anne Frank in the topic 'hidden heroism' and how to debate when learning about the Fire of London. Staff expect all pupils to do their best. Pupils learn reading, writing and mathematics successfully.

Most pupils behave well. Pupils pay attention in lessons and follow instructions promptly. This is a nurturing school, and pupils who need help to make the right choice get effective support. Staff respond quickly to any poor behaviour, and bullying is rare.

At lunchtimes pupils benefit from a range of activities. They play basketball together and exercise in the outdoor gym. Year 6 sports buddies organise games and ensure that nobody gets left out. Pupils are happy to talk to staff if they are upset, and know they will get help. They feel safe.

Leaders arrange lots of new experiences for pupils. Pupils attend clubs, including yoga, cross country and ukulele. They learn to use tools and light a fire safely at forest school. Pupils understand democracy while voting in an election to be 'headteacher' for a day. They build confidence performing at a local theatre. Pupils enjoy coming to this school.

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

'Inspiring success' is the school motto and underpins all that happens in this school. Leaders and governors are keen for all pupils to succeed. Knowledge and skills are taught step by step, helping pupils to build on previous learning. Pupils are used to discussing ideas to develop their thinking. Staff ask questions to help pupils make links in their understanding, and to deepen their thinking. Pupils who find work difficult are given support and, as a result, disruption to learning is uncommon.

Reading is a priority at this school. Pupils are taught phonics as soon as they start school in the Reception Year. They learn these sounds in a logical order and staff teach the pupils songs and actions to help them learn. Any pupils falling behind are helped to catch up. As

pupils become fluent readers, they develop a wide range of skills that they use to support their learning in all subjects. Pupils read a wide range of quality books. They enjoy reading together daily, and listening to books read aloud.

The school's curriculum is fully planned and sequenced in some foundation subjects. Leaders and staff have had lots of training and are now implementing the remaining plans. Staff have started putting the new curriculum in place, and pupils are already learning more and doing more. Staff are trialling strategies to help make sure the pupils do not forget this new learning.

All pupils are known as individuals from the time they start in the Reception Year. Before starting school, information about the pupils is gathered from families and pre-school settings. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified promptly. Staff make sure they give them the extra support they need to learn alongside their classmates. Leaders ensure that these pupils benefit fully from the wider opportunities organised by the school, including out-of-school activities.

Staff are proud to work at Benfield. They feel their workload is manageable and all in the interests of pupils. They are supported well by leaders. Staff say that leaders listen to any concerns and that these are taken seriously. Leaders are currently reviewing how pupils' learning is assessed effectively, across the whole curriculum, without adding to staff workload.

Governors and leaders are keen to ensure that all pupils are well prepared for the wider world. Pupils learn about different cultures when finding out about festivals, such as Diwali. They develop their social skills when helping at events such as the Christmas fair and learn how to care for our planet at eco club. Parents and carers are very positive about the range of learning opportunities provided. As one parent commented, 'This primary school has enabled my child to enter secondary school with a large breadth of knowledge and a real love of learning.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn how to be safe. Leaders have thought about the risks pupils face in the local area. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and when near water.

Staff take part in regular training. They know what to do if they have a concern about a child and act promptly. Staff work together with families and local organisations to make sure pupils get the help needed.

Leaders make careful checks on new staff and any volunteers who help in school. Governors review safeguarding regularly. However, they do not always make sure that they refer to the latest safeguarding guidance when they check the school's arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have constructed a curriculum that is appropriately ambitious for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Subjects have been linked together by exciting topics. Leaders need to finish planning the sequence of knowledge, skills and vocabulary for the remaining subjects. Leaders also need to refine how they assess pupils' learning in the foundation subjects, and how staff help pupils to remember more.
- The governors' recruitment process is fit for purpose. They make regular checks on safeguarding. However, governors need to ensure that their monitoring of safeguarding is informed by the latest legislation.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 21–22 April 2016.

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're 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

Unique reference number	114412
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10111358
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ms Jenny Barnard-Langston
Headteacher	Miss Emma Lake (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.benfield.brighton-hove.dbprimary.com/
Date of previous inspection	21–22 April 2016

Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- I met with three governors, the executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years coordinator and the subject leaders for English and history.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and history. This involved talking to subject leaders, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, hearing pupils read, talking to pupils and teachers.
- I scrutinised the single central record and other documents related to safeguarding. I talked to parents, staff and pupils. The responses to the online questionnaires were also considered.
- I visited all classrooms including those in Reception. I observed pupils during the school day, in the playground and dining room and while moving around the school.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's own evaluation and improvement plan, the headteacher's reports and external reports.

Inspection team

Rosemary Addison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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