

Inspection of a good school: Downsview Community Primary School

Beech Avenue, Swanley, Kent BR8 8AU

Inspection dates:

7–8 January 2020

Outcome

Downsview Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education pupils receive is very variable. The many changes to leadership and staffing in recent years resulted in the school losing its way. Staff want pupils to do their best but people have had different ideas about how things should be done and initiatives have not always been seen through. Consequently, pupils have not achieved as well as they could and standards have slipped.

The new headteacher has a clear vision about the improvements needed. He is making sure that everyone pulls together. Staff feel that the school is 'returning to a happy place'. Parents, carers and pupils recognise the positive changes. However, much work still needs to be done to ensure that expectations rise and that pupils are given the best possible chances.

Most pupils enjoy school. They enjoy their friendships and say that teachers help them.

Pupils feel safe. They know adults care about them. They are clear that bullying is rare, although, sometimes, the behaviour of a small number of pupils can affect learning in lessons. Overall, though, behaviour is improving.

The newly implemented school values are well understood by all. These provide a secure foundation on which leaders can now build the necessary improvements.

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

Leaders, including governors, have high ambitions for pupils to achieve well. They have set their sights on improving outcomes and are working effectively together. In the past, leaders have not used training well enough to support staff development. This means that staff have not always developed the skills and subject knowledge needed to plan and teach the full range of subjects well. Subject leaders, many of whom are new to post,

have a growing understanding of their roles but their work is in the early stages of development.

Additional adults support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to the best of their abilities, with great care and some success. However, staff require further training to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to enable this group of pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes.

There are some strengths in the quality of education. For instance, pupils' subject knowledge in science is being developed effectively. Pupils' learning is extended and reinforced through interesting experiments, such as dissecting a heart in Year 6 and observing how the roots of a plant grow in Year 1. Teachers, particularly in the higher years, introduce pupils to some excellent books that are a great read. These books stretch pupils' thinking and expand their vocabulary. Despite these evident strengths, inconsistencies remain.

Leaders have not prioritised early reading well enough. The proportion of pupils achieving success in the phonics screening check is below the national average. The teaching of phonics is not as strong as it needs to be to ensure that all pupils keep up or catch up quickly again if they fall behind. Despite leaders' best efforts to bring together reading books to help pupils practise sounds, these books do not always support learning in class, including in the early years.

Children are settled and happy in the early years. Staff form strong relationships with the children and care for them well. Children enjoy stories and explore number in depth. For instance, during the inspection, children made successful links between a rhyme about 'five speckled frogs' and created and acted out their own song about five monsters.

The school's personal development programme is not well developed. There are limited opportunities for pupils to explore or develop their interests more widely. In addition, leaders recognise that urgent work is needed to strengthen pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding. Plans are under way but efforts now need to be intensified.

Pupils are eager to comply with the new school values and ethos to which leaders aspire. There are 'green shoots' of improvement in pupils' attendance because pupils and parents are beginning to trust that things are getting better. On the whole, pupils display polite behaviour around the school. Staff and pupils are clear that incidents of poor behaviour are now reducing.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They work well together. Staff morale is higher than it has been in recent times. Staff are relieved that new leadership is bringing much-needed stability and a clear sense of direction. Staff appreciate leaders' interest in their professional development and well-being. They cite examples where leaders have reviewed and adapted their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher and governors have ensured that staff are well trained in safeguarding. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They are vigilant and know who to speak to if they have any concerns about a pupil's safety.

Procedures and systems in the school ensure that pupils are kept safe. Last year, governors carefully monitored the single central record to assure themselves that recruitment checks were accurately recorded. However, record-keeping is not always organised well, nor are actions recorded appropriately. Nonetheless, leaders are determined to get the right support for pupils and their families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are safe in school. However, leaders need to ensure that record-keeping is further strengthened so that any information gathered or actions taken are carefully collated and recorded.
- Leaders need to redouble their efforts to ensure that pupils develop a love of reading and are successfully taught to read. Teachers and support staff need training to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver phonics effectively. Reading books should better match pupils' reading ability so that struggling readers are able to practise the sounds they learn.
- Many leaders across the school are new to their roles. Further training and support are needed to ensure that this aspect of leadership successfully improves the curriculum and teaching across all subjects.
- Leaders are determined that pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum and that it is taught well throughout the school. Further training is necessary to ensure that all teachers have the necessary subject knowledge and skills to deliver the planned curriculum.
- The school offers limited opportunities that engage and interest pupils more broadly or enhance their SMSC development. Leaders should carefully consider and swiftly implement a range of opportunities to improve pupils' personal development.

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 the school to be good on 7–8 March 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 the school and 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

Unique reference number	134515
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10133189
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Elwood
Headteacher	Richard Moore
Website	www.downsview-primary.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7 September 2016

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2019.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school offers an after-school club each day.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- I did deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and science. I discussed curriculum design with subject leaders, carried out a series of lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers about the curriculum.
- I met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- I took account of the 33 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the additional 23 free-text responses.
- I spoke to staff to gather their views of the school and took into account the views of 18 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey, as well as one letter from a member of staff.

- I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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