

Inspection of a good school: Bradfield Primary School

Heath Road, Bradfield, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2UZ

Inspection date: 17 June 2021

Outcome

Bradfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to come to school. This is reflected by good attendance. The school is calm and well ordered. Pupils say they feel safe and bullying is rare. Pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning and enjoy their topic work. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils listen well to instructions and to each other. They play well together, and breaktimes and lunchtimes are sociable affairs. In the early years, children know how to follow the clear routines that are in place. Children enjoy learning and are keen to share what they know.

Teachers regularly read to pupils. When they do so, it is with enthusiasm and expression. Teachers' book choices are thoughtful. They often broaden pupils' knowledge about cultural diversity and religion.

Most children enjoy reading and listening to stories. However, there are pupils who are not supported well enough to be able to read fluently. These pupils are often the most vulnerable. They are not catching up quickly enough. Some of these pupils find reading difficult and therefore not enjoyable.

Some parents that responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are extremely positive about what the school provides. In contrast, a few parents raised some concerns, particularly about the quality of education and the lack of communication from the school to home.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed how they teach reading to whole classes. This new approach focuses on pupils gaining a detailed understanding of what the book is about before they begin to read. Teachers identify the key vocabulary they

want pupils to learn so pupils can quickly become familiar with the text. In these lessons, pupils gain an understanding about what the author intended.

School leaders and teachers are aware that the monitoring of reading is not accurate. This means that they do not know how well pupils are doing. The teaching of early reading ensures that most pupils learn their sounds well. However, some children's books are not always matched to the sounds they know. In addition, leaders have introduced a reading scheme where pupils complete a quiz to check their understanding of the books they have read. This is not checking reading fluency or helping to identify struggling readers. Using this system alone is not helping teachers gain a precise view of how well pupils can read. Inspectors found that some pupils were reading books that were not well matched to their reading ability.

The weakest readers, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not getting the precise support they need to get better at reading. Leaders and governors' monitoring activities have not identified these weaknesses. Leaders and governors recognise that this must be rectified as a matter of urgency.

The curriculum that leaders have chosen to teach in subjects such as geography and science, has not been adapted to the needs of the pupils. Teachers do not consider what they want pupils to learn in these subjects. Although the key skills are being taught, pupils do not remember the important information over time. Pupils learn about different countries in geography. However, most pupils could not locate these countries on a map. Leaders have not given enough consideration about how the curriculum is organised, so that pupils know and remember more.

Some parents' concerns about the quality of education are justified. In addition, school leaders and governors recognise that there is more work to do with parents so that parents are kept informed about what their children are learning at school.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that the reading curriculum, including early reading, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection. In addition, the extent to which leaders are adapting their curriculum to ensure subjects such as geography and science build on pupils' prior learning, should also be an area of focus.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The procedures for the recruitment of staff are secure. Staff are well trained to keep pupils safe. They are clear about what to do if they have concerns about pupils. Safeguarding records are thorough and show prompt and careful recording. Actions are carried out in a timely manner. Leaders are aware of local risks and address them through the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The reading curriculum is not designed well enough. This prevents pupils from becoming fluent, confident readers. The weakest readers across the school have fallen further behind their peers. Leaders need to ensure that they design a curriculum where books are matched to pupils' reading ability. In addition, leaders need to provide precise support to help pupils, including those with SEND, to catch up quickly.
- The curriculum plans for subjects such as geography and science do not build successfully on pupils' prior learning. This means that pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. Leaders need to adapt the curriculum so pupils can make connections to new learning and remember what they have learned long term.
- Leaders' monitoring activities are not identifying the weaknesses in the quality of education. Leaders and governors need to ensure that they carry out monitoring activities that check on what pupils know and can do.

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 or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 28 and 29 June 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 information from 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.

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 [here](#).

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	114735
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10193971
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	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anja Newman
Headteacher	Maria Luck-Davies
Website	www.bradfieldprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bradfield Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- Pupil mobility has stabilised since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher to discuss curriculum planning, safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, and personal development and attendance. One inspector met with the leader of SEND. Inspectors held meetings with four members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and also spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and in groups about their learning. One inspector listened to the weakest readers from Years 1 to 6. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with staff across the school about their well-being and workload.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and one letter from a parent written to the lead inspector.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: Reading, mathematics, science, and geography.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Charlie Fordham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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