

Inspection of a good school: Bengo Primary School

The Avenue, Bengo, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 3DX

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2021

Outcome

Bengo Primary School continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Bengo Primary School. They say it is a safe and happy place to be. Pupils get along well each other; they are kind and respectful. Pupils and staff have good relationships, and this helps the school to operate in a smooth, calm way.

Pupils know what bullying is because the school has taught them about it. Pupils say it does not happen. They are clear that behaviour is good. They play well together on the playground and behave impeccably during lessons. Pupils allow others in class to learn without disruption. There is an expectation that pupils must be allowed to learn in a calm, peaceful environment. Pupils make sure this happens.

Pupils know that if they have a worry or concern, there is an adult for them to talk to. Staff know the pupils well and are trained to provide emotional and pastoral support if it is required.

Pupils are supported well by all the adults who work at the school. If a pupil needs some extra help, they receive it. Pupils are keen to learn because the curriculum is well planned and matched to their needs.

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

Leaders, including governors, want the very best for all pupils. They have looked at what they think works best for pupils' learning. The curriculum identifies the important knowledge pupils need to understand and the order in which it should be taught. Leaders' subject plans highlight what pupils need to remember so that this can be checked by teachers. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils learn this core knowledge. Staff feel that this is having a positive impact on improving pupils' knowledge as they move through the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access a full curriculum. It is not narrowed in any way but at times is adapted to help pupils catch up. Work in the books for pupils with SEND shows that these adaptations and additional use of specific resources are helping to improve outcomes.

Leaders have adapted the curriculum where necessary. For example, in mathematics pupils are revisiting aspects that they found harder to understand when receiving remote education. Pupils say they enjoy the subject as they get to practise what they are learning frequently. This is helping pupils to explain what they have been learning.

Leaders understand how important it is for pupils to read fluently and confidently. The reading curriculum helps younger pupils quickly learn letters and sounds. They are given lots of opportunities to practise these sounds. Pupils show that they can then apply these sounds when reading books that are carefully matched to their reading ability. Older pupils talk fondly of reading and are happy with the choice of reading books available to them.

Pupils are taught about diversity. They understand that people have different beliefs and come from different backgrounds. Pupils could describe how the curriculum has helped them develop a broader understanding of race and equality.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire reflect how satisfied parents are with all aspects of life at school for their children. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their child is happy at school.

Governance is effective. Governors are able to ask leaders challenging questions because they know the school well. The information they gather helps governors hold leaders to account for the financial and academic performance of the school. Governors work closely with leaders to support staff well-being.

Leaders encourage pupils' wider development, and they celebrate pupils' achievements in and out of school. The school's art gallery includes extremely high-quality artwork and has inspired pupils to further their own artistic talents. Year 5 pupils run a research group, known as 'Pupil Voice'. These pupils are developing leadership and teamwork skills. They also give a wider voice to pupils at school by asking their opinions on subjects such as plastic pollution and the current use of COVID-19 (coronavirus) bubbles. There is still more to do to provide similar opportunities for pupils in other year groups.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that further work on pupils' personal development may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All statutory checks are carried out prior to staff employment, with meticulous record-keeping. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders are

appropriately trained, and all staff receive training that is ongoing and thorough. This means that staff know how to make a referral should it be required and access appropriate pupil support. Leaders deal with any issues in an appropriate and timely way.

The named safeguarding governor brings additional expertise to support designated leaders and checks that systems are keeping pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not fully develop all pupils' interests and talents. This means that pupils' personal development is not as consistently strong as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum provides more pupils with greater access to a wide and rich set of experiences in order to promote their 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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 28 February 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	117361
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10193970
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of the governing body	Mark Smith
Headteacher	Julie Starkiss
Website	www.bengeo.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The school has a Nursery and caters for children aged three to 11.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) is above average.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with the headteacher and have taken that into account in my evaluation of the school.
- I did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. I spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. I looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- I listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- I met with the special educational needs coordinator and members of the local governing body, and spoke to a representative from the local authority.

- I looked at the single central register and spoke to leaders, teachers, governors, and pupils about safeguarding.
- I considered the 169 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 173 free-text responses. The inspector also considered the 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and 27 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Milligan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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