

Inspection of Boreham Primary School

Juniper Road, Boreham, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 3DB

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Too many pupils do not achieve well enough in their education at Boreham Primary School. The curriculum pupils are taught is not fully established.

Pupils feel safe and are happy to come to school. They are respectful to each other and to all adults they work with. Pupils talk positively about the importance of the school's values, which include 'care' and 'friendship'. Pupils understand how to show these values in the way they behave and act towards others.

The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is good. There are very few reports of bullying. When, and if, bullying does happen, pupils say it is dealt with quickly. Pupils thrive on being praised by teachers in recognition for their hard work and good effort. This contributes towards pupils being keen to try hard and do their best.

Pupils enjoy opportunities to take part in additional experiences that help their personal development. For example, they join in the wide range of after-school clubs and participate in themed events, such as the 'online safety day'. Through their lessons and assemblies, pupils develop important personal qualities, such as resilience and independence.

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

Leaders have not fully considered what knowledge pupils need to learn at all stages of their primary education. Leaders have reviewed some areas of the curriculum successfully, such as writing and mathematics. Other areas, such as early reading, have not been as well thought through to ensure leaders consider what pupils need to learn to achieve their best. It is not always clear what pupils should know, and by when. These factors lead to inconsistencies in how the curriculum is delivered across the school.

Where weaknesses in the curriculum have been identified, leaders have not responded with enough urgency. While this is in part due to the pandemic, leaders' actions have not been sufficiently rigorous to ensure the quality of education is good enough. As a result, some pupils are performing less well than other pupils in their age group.

The reading curriculum is not planned clearly enough, and teachers have not received the training to be able to teach reading well. The teaching of phonics is not good enough because adults' expectations are not consistently high. Some pupils are given books to practise reading that do not match the sounds they know and have been learning. This leaves gaps in pupils' knowledge and delays their progress in being able to read fluently.

The early years curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious. Leaders do not consider children's starting points well enough. Staff lack the specialist knowledge to support

children to learn well in the Reception Year. Curriculum plans do not clearly show the important knowledge children need for learning in Year 1 and beyond. While the curriculum has not been well thought through in many areas of learning, staff do provide effective support for children's personal, social and emotional needs.

Support for the most vulnerable pupils is varied in quality. Where the work of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is established, needs are well supported. Some teachers have less expertise to support identified needs, and this leads to less effective classroom provision. Disadvantaged pupils have additional help, but this is not planned precisely enough to ensure their needs are fully met.

Teachers have high expectations for behaviour. Classroom environments are calm, and playtimes are orderly and safe. Where pupils are not as interested in their learning, they are less focused. Nevertheless, there is little disruption to the learning of others.

Leaders are committed to supporting the personal development of pupils. This is a strength. Through their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, pupils learn about healthy relationships with their peers and how to stay safe online. Adults in school help pupils to be aware of diversity in the world around them. Pupils learn about different cultures, faiths and communities. This helps promote the qualities of mutual respect and tolerance.

Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff are proud to be working in the school. They appreciate the support leaders provide, and this has been especially the case throughout the pandemic.

Governors' activity to monitor the quality of education has been not been precise enough over time. Leaders', including governors', plans to improve the school do not have clear, measurable targets. This hinders the ability of leaders to review their work and know what difference it is making.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils feel safe and understand advice they are given to tell an adult if they have 'a hurt body or hurt feelings'.

Leaders regularly review practices in place to ensure a high standard of care. Staff are well trained and know about the different types of risks pupils could face. Clear systems are in place for staff to share concerns with leaders. Shared concerns are routinely acted upon to make sure children are kept safe. Leaders make good use of external services for advice and support where required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not designed and implemented a curriculum that is fit for purpose from the early years through to Year 6. This has led to inconsistencies with how the curriculum is delivered across the school. Leaders should ensure that a suitable, well-considered curriculum is put in place so that staff know what should be taught in all subjects. Leaders should also make sure that staff are trained to deliver the planned curriculum effectively.
- The school's approach to early reading is only partially considered. Younger pupils in the school are not learning to read well enough to support their future learning. Leaders should ensure that early reading has a high priority in the school from the time that pupils enter Reception. They must ensure that all staff are well trained to teach phonics and early reading, and that pupils have access to books that they can use to build fluency.
- Leaders lack ambition for learning in the early years. Children do not benefit from meaningful learning across all areas of learning of the curriculum. They are not being prepared well enough for Year 1. Leaders should ensure that staff are well trained to know how younger children learn so children get off to a good start in their primary education.
- Leaders have not been quick enough to respond to identified weaknesses in the school, including within the curriculum. Their plans to improve the school have lacked focus. This has had a negative impact on the learning of the youngest pupils. Leaders should ensure there are clearly identified priorities for improvement in the school development plan. These should detail specific and precise actions that can be measured.
- Governors' actions have not always focused on the right priorities that will make a difference to the quality of education. This has resulted in limited progress in areas of the curriculum identified as weak. Governors need to ensure their expertise is used to rigorously monitor and check progress towards key priorities to secure school improvement.

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 Ofsted 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.

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	114937
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10199322
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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Roger Leeke
Headteacher	Ian Bowyer
Website	www.boreham.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2006, under section 5

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of significant leadership and staffing changes, including, more recently, the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.
- Boreham Primary School does not currently use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- Out-of-school childcare overseen by the governing body is available on the school site.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also met with the SENCo, school business manager and curriculum leaders for mathematics and early years.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, computing and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader and discussed safeguarding with other staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils across the school site.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- Inspectors considered 80 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 80 free-text comments from parents. Inspectors also considered the 30 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 28 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paula Masters

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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