

Inspection of a good school: Bligh Primary School (Juniors)

Bligh Way, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 2XJ

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well looked after by leaders and staff who care deeply about the community they serve. As one parent wrote, 'It is a school that supports children, parents and the wider community'. Leaders and staff share a strong vision for pupils to develop a range of skills that will help to successfully prepare them for the future. For example, leaders are clear that they want all pupils to experience leadership opportunities throughout the school. Pupils have lots of opportunities to do this, ranging from being part of the 'Pupil Parliament' to representing the school at local sports competitions. Pupils are rightfully proud to belong to these different groups within their school community. They enthusiastically discuss their achievements and wear with pride the badges that they earn to celebrate the core values of the school.

Leaders have high expectations for behaviour. Pupils feel that staff do take bullying seriously and they are confident that it is tackled effectively. However, not all pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Some pupils told the inspector that low-level disruption can interrupt their lessons.

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

There is a sharp focus on ensuring all pupils are provided with the knowledge and tools to read fluently and with understanding. All pupils have access to a wide range of books that they can read, and pupils who struggle are provided with additional time to practise in school. However, not all pupils who struggle to decode are provided with the help they need to quickly and effectively overcome their barriers. Some pupils also do not have the knowledge of vocabulary and reading comprehension to successfully access the tasks they are set. Some staff require further training to teach reading successfully.

Leaders are passionate about pupils being confident mathematicians by the end of their time at primary school. Assessment approaches in mathematics are providing teachers with detailed information about areas where pupils have gaps or misconceptions in their learning. This information is then being used by teachers to target specific knowledge that pupils need to secure before moving on to more complex learning.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects and value the opportunities they have to learn about the local context within their curriculum. In the wider curriculum, leaders have carefully selected the content to be taught and the order in which pupils will be taught it. In some cases, for example in history, teachers' subject knowledge is not yet strong enough to teach the ambitious curriculum content leaders have selected. Some pupils are not always being appropriately supported to develop a rich and varied understanding of the important content being taught. For example, pupil misconceptions are not always identified and challenged during questioning or teacher feedback. In some subjects, for example personal, social and health education (PSHE), leaders have acknowledged that what is taught and when it is taught will need to be closely monitored. This will help to check that all pupils are learning age-appropriate knowledge about how to manage risks and keep safe.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with the additional support they require within class and out of class. Pupils show strong relationships with the adults supporting them and they participate in many lessons with enthusiasm and confidence. Where staff have strong subject knowledge, they provide pupils with SEND with more precise feedback to support their learning, for example in mathematics.

Not all pupils demonstrate focused engagement in their learning. Some low-level disruption can interrupt the learning of others. Staff know their pupils well and create supportive classroom environments, but there is more work to do to develop positive attitudes to learning across all lessons and year groups.

Staff are proud to be part of the school and value the support they are given from leaders and each other. Leaders have taken very deliberate steps to support staff to manage their workload, including how staff receive their regular training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders demonstrate a robust understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff have been well trained to respond to any concerns they might have for the welfare of their pupils. Leaders know the local context well, and the training in place reflects this. Staff receive regular updates about emerging or changing contextual needs and they undertake regular quizzes to check their knowledge. All staff and leaders take appropriate and timely action to ensure the needs of their pupils are met. This includes positive working relationships with external professionals to seek advice and support where required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils who are behind in their reading are not always provided with the most appropriate strategies to decode the texts they are reading. This means that pupils remain unable to decode words that they find difficult. Leaders should prioritise ensuring that all staff have the phonics knowledge required to support readers who are struggling to read.
- Staff do not yet have the secure subject knowledge required to teach the content that leaders have selected within the wider curriculum. This means that some misconceptions are not being identified and tackled before additional knowledge is taught. Leaders should increase teacher confidence through subject-specific training and targeted subject-specific support.
- Many of the curriculum plans in place are detailed with a clear outline of what is to be taught. The implementation of these plans is not yet meeting leaders' high expectations. Leaders should carefully monitor and support teachers to ensure that the curriculum is being taught as intended.
- Not all teachers share the same high expectations for pupils' attitudes to their learning. This means that learning can sometimes be interrupted by low-level disruption. Leaders should ensure that all staff are supported to tackle any low-level disruption quickly and efficiently so that all pupils can learn in calm and purposeful environments.

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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bligh Junior School to be good in February 2013.

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	144566
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10203140
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	272
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Tiffany Beck
Headteacher	Christian Markham
Website	www.blighprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bligh Primary School (Juniors) converted to become an academy school in October 2017. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is part of the Maritime Academy trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector met with the CEO of the trust, the chair of trustees, the headteacher and senior leaders, representatives from the local academy council, other school leaders, parents, staff and pupils.
- Early reading, mathematics and history were considered as part of this inspection. The inspector met with the subject leaders of these curriculum areas, visited lessons across the school, met with pupils and class teachers. The inspector also looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read. Geography curriculum planning was considered with the

headteacher. PSHE curriculum planning documents were also discussed with the PSHE subject leader as part of the inspection.

- Arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed by scrutinising safeguarding policies, processes and written records, staff recruitment checks and training records. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed by 30 staff and 27 parents, including 20 free-text comments through our online surveys.

Inspection team

Hanna Miller, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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