

Inspection of a good school: Vale School, Worthing

Vale Avenue, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 0DB

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2022

Outcome

Vale School, Worthing continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very positive about their school. They enjoy their learning. Pupils feel safe. They are supported well by nurturing relationships with staff and each other. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's 'HEART' values: honesty, excellence, appreciation, respect and teamwork. They are motivated by the rewards they receive for demonstrating these attributes. The school's central rule, be kind, is meaningful to pupils. This supports good behaviour throughout the school and helps to ensure that incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with quickly.

Expectations of behaviour and learning are high. Pupils strive to meet them. The school is a well-ordered environment. Pupils move around the school sensibly. They are polite and considerate, holding doors open and greeting people. The atmosphere is relaxed but purposeful.

An appetite for learning abounds. This extends beyond the taught curriculum to the wide range of additional opportunities available to pupils. Pupils explained how they were proud of their achievements in cross-country or inter-school mathematics competitions. They relish opportunities to take on responsibility within school by, for example, becoming a digital leader. When pupils leave the school, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

Leaders continue to strive to enable pupils to achieve the very best outcomes. Leaders have thoughtfully revised the teams responsible for developing the curriculum, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision and pastoral support. This has helped to ensure that the school continues to move forward despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governors provide strong additional support for the school. Staff feel that leaders consider their workload and well-being. They say that adaptations, such as changes to the marking policy, have been beneficial to them and to the pupils.

Leaders have developed a broad and interesting curriculum. In English and mathematics, the curriculum builds in clear steps as pupils move through the school. This helps pupils to build a deep and secure understanding of these subjects. Leaders have considered the curriculum structure and content in other subjects. However, they are not always clear enough about what and when pupils should learn new content and how this builds their knowledge across key stages. This means that pupils do not have the depth of knowledge across the wider curriculum that they have in English and mathematics. Leaders have created subject teams to help to address this. While this work is well under way, there is more to be done to develop the ambitious curriculum to which leaders aspire.

Reading is a priority. Children get off to a good start in learning to read. From the beginning of Reception, phonics is taught regularly. Staff are well trained in delivering the phonics programme. Children grow in confidence as readers because the books they take home to read are carefully matched to their growing ability. This helps them to experience success. Leaders have made sure that additional support is in place for any pupils who need to catch up with their phonics, including for those who are behind as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Careful and regular assessment makes sure that any gaps are quickly identified and addressed. Pupils throughout the school are positive about reading and stories. Staff read to them often from a carefully selected range of books. Pupils read widely, regularly and well.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND have their needs carefully identified. They work well with other agencies to make sure that support plans for pupils are sharply focused. However, these plans are not always implemented successfully. As a result, pupils are sometimes not supported well enough to help them overcome barriers to learning.

Pupils behave well in classes. Low-level disruption is rare. Everyone understands the behaviour policy. Pupils say that it helps them to know what is expected of them. Staff are confident that the behaviour policy is consistently applied and supports teaching and learning.

Pupils' personal development is well considered throughout the curriculum and wider school life. For example, pupils explained how food technology lessons had helped inform their decisions about choosing healthier food options. They also explained how they have learned about the value of spending personal time away from screens and digital devices. Pupils learn about a range of beliefs and religions. They demonstrate respect for others and a curiosity about the wider world.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that the systems in place to identify safeguarding concerns are robust and secure. Staff training is regular, and record-keeping processes are well understood across the school. This means that everyone knows what to look out for and what to do if they have concerns.

Leaders respond quickly and effectively to any identified safeguarding issues. This includes responding to any online concerns that come to light through a pupil's digital worry box.

Leaders regularly review records to spot any patterns and help manage future risks by, for example, adapting the curriculum to help pupils keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, pupils with SEND are not getting the effective support that leaders have recommended and planned for them. This means that sometimes pupils are not supported well enough to help them overcome barriers to learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils with SEND are consistently provided with the effective support they need to experience success.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects in the wider curriculum. This means that pupils are not consistently learning or remembering knowledge as well in some subjects as they do in English and mathematics. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the curriculum in the foundation subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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	125865
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10211384
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	605
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kevin Jenkins
Headteacher	Martin Garratt
Website	www.vale.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The leadership structure of the school has changed since the previous inspection. At the beginning of this calendar year, a second deputy headteacher role was created.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with senior leaders. Meetings were also held with other school leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Deep dives took place in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a

sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspectors spoke with staff about their safeguarding training and spoke with pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- Responses to Ofsted's parent and carer, pupil and staff surveys were reviewed. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a parent. Staff met with the lead inspector to gather their views about the school, including discussions about workload and well-being.
- The inspectors completed a tour of the school with pupils and spoke to them during lessons and at other times of the school day.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sam French

Ofsted Inspector

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