

Inspection of an outstanding school: Blean Primary School

Whitstable Road, Blean, Canterbury, Kent CT2 9ED

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2022

Outcome

Blean Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this exceptional school. The enthusiasm displayed by pupils and staff is infectious. Pupils love coming to school. They are extremely happy, feel safe and thoroughly enjoy their learning.

Pupils meet the high expectations for them to succeed in their academic and personal development. Strong and trusting relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. One parent said, 'It is a very nurturing environment, facilitating the children to be the best they can be, not just academically but socially too.'

Pupils understand and live up to the school's values of responsibility, curiosity, resourcefulness, resilience and collaboration. These are very successfully threaded through the curriculum and through all aspects of pupils' personal development, for example in assemblies, playtimes and extra activities. Pupils are remarkably friendly and work and play extremely well together. They listen to others' opinions even if they disagree with them.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They follow the '3Bs': 'Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe'. Pupils understand what bullying is and say it never happens. If it did, they are confident that teachers would sort it out quickly and fairly. One parent said, 'The Blean school experience has given my child a well-rounded education and great foundation to grow from.'

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

The headteacher has an unwavering determination to provide the very best learning experiences for all pupils. This is shared by all leaders and staff and accomplished with much skill and passion. Leadership is exceptional. It is inspiring and highly motivating for staff and pupils. There is a remarkable sense of teamwork among staff, in a supportive atmosphere. Leaders have excellent knowledge and expertise, which is often called upon by other schools in the local authority and beyond.

Governors have high expectations of school leaders. They ask probing questions, visit the school and ensure that they are extremely well informed. Senior leaders are mindful of teachers' workload and well-being. Teachers feel valued and trusted and welcome the high-quality professional development.

The curriculum is broad, ambitious and vibrant. It is exceptionally well designed and highly engaging. The curriculum is consistently and securely embedded across the school. It is diverse and inclusive for all pupils across every subject, class and year group. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the same rich curriculum as their peers. Leaders identify pupils' needs as early as possible and provide the right, tailored support to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve as well as they can.

Teachers expertly question pupils, to encourage them to think about their own learning, to solve problems and to challenge them. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils were challenged to think about how they could find out the circumference of a circle. Children in Reception make a great start to school. Learning is built into all activities. A child playing on the carpet explained that he had made a pyramid, 'with four triangles and one square'.

Reading is a clear priority in the school, for enjoyment and as a means for learning in all subjects. Teaching phonics starts from the beginning of Reception. It is consistently taught with skill and enthusiasm. Pupils confidently apply their phonic knowledge when reading. They are provided with books to read that match the sounds they are learning at school. Pupils develop a love of reading right from the start. Teachers' passion for reading has a very positive influence on the pupils, who 'catch' their enthusiasm. Pupils develop as confident, fluent readers of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The reading curriculum has a very positive influence on the excellent quality of pupils' writing.

Pupils' develop personal attributes and skills to stand them in good stead for later life. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to take part in an extensive range of after-school clubs and visits. Pupils benefit from the expertise of specialists through the links with the university. For example, pupils in Year 3 visited the anthropology department as part of their study of the Stone Age, which provided a memorable learning experience. Pupils are proud of their leadership roles and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils learn about the lives and achievements of people from a range of backgrounds and ethnicities. They develop a strong understanding and respect for different religions and cultures. Pupils develop independence, perseverance and resilience.

Parents are full of high praise for the school and its leadership. One parent expressed the view shared by many: 'A fantastic school with brilliant leadership, teachers and support.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' well-being and safety are priorities for everyone. Staff are well trained. They know pupils and their families very well and swiftly identify any child who may be at risk. They know what to do to report any concerns. Leaders are resolute and take swift and decisive action. They liaise closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. The appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work in the school. Pupils can confidently explain how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils, staff and parents agree that the school keeps pupils safe.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 school to be outstanding in March 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 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	118356
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10211917
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	429
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hugh Samuelson
Headteacher	Ian Rowden
Website	https://bleanprimary.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The senior leadership of the school has changed significantly since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in January 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and governors. She also held a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also looked at other subject documents and observed some pupils reading to staff. Pupils were observed at lunch and in the playground. The inspector spoke informally to groups of pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader and his deputies, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records and talked informally to pupils and staff.
- The inspector considered the views of 91 parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, and 54 free-text responses. She also received one letter. The inspector took account of 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2022