

Inspection of Downsbrook Primary School

Dominion Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 8GD

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Downsbrook Primary School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, 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 of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to be part of Downsbrook. They are enthusiastic about their lessons and they feel well cared for. One parent that inspectors spoke to said that her child loves school and, 'runs to school every morning'. There is little bullying and it is dealt with well by staff if it does happen.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe. They understand how to stay safe online. Pupils behave respectfully towards one another and there are strong relationships between pupils and staff. The school is a calm and orderly place. During social times, pupils socialise harmoniously together, play football or help each other on the school's climbing wall.

Pupils are extremely excited about the school's forthcoming musical production and very keen to become involved. Pupils are also enthusiastic about becoming 'peer mediators' to help pupils who have had disagreements to settle their differences. Other pupils become 'Makaton mentors', helping their classmates to learn sign language.

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

The headteacher has galvanised senior leaders and staff into making much needed improvements. The trust has supported staff well in this mission. Parents, pupils and staff wholeheartedly agree that the school is well led and has improved immensely over the past four years.

In most subjects, leaders have designed the curriculum well. In mathematics, science and physical education, leaders ensure that staff are clear about the important knowledge that needs to be taught. Learning is organised, so that pupils build on what they have previously learned. Teachers understand what pupils need to know by the end of each topic. However, not all subjects are this well organised. In a few subjects, such as languages and history, knowledge is not precisely selected or ordered and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders have put plans in place to improve the curriculum in these subjects.

Reading is a priority to leaders. Children in Reception learn phonics as soon as they start school. Teachers teach phonics well. They keep a close eye on pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils who need to catch up, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are helped through extra phonics sessions. Older pupils who may not have learned to read fluently are also well supported. Pupils read increasingly widely as they move through the school. Teachers choose class books, so that pupils deepen their understanding of equality and diversity.

Subject leaders know their subjects well. Teachers select well-chosen activities that are closely matched to pupils' needs. Pupils learn to concentrate on teachers'

instructions from Reception, where they are reminded to pay attention and follow their teachers' 'magnetic eyes'. Teachers use clear explanations to ensure that pupils understand increasingly complicated subject vocabulary as they move through the year groups. Staff are well trained to provide extra support for pupils with SEND, which ensures that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Within this inclusive school, pupils develop a deep knowledge of the rights and views of others. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop personally. For example, pupils become 'book buddies' and 'sports leaders', so that they can help others in reading or playing competitive sports. Pupils are eager to attend school visits, such as visiting a local farm, going to the theatre or a planetarium. In personal, social and health education, pupils learn about a wide range of issues, including what it means to behave respectfully within a relationship. Children in reception learn about cooperation, personal hygiene and road safety.

Too many disadvantaged pupils miss school regularly. Overall, pupils' attendance has risen since the previous national lockdown. However, leaders' strategies to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance have not been effective enough.

Staff feel that their workload and well-being is part of leaders' thinking when leaders decide on school policies. Staff morale is high and almost all enjoy working at the school. They feel valued by leaders and are appreciative of the training provided.

Trustees understand the school's strengths and weakness well. They have provided high-quality support for leaders and staff. Expertise is shared across the trust's schools. Trustees challenge leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' safety. Trustees monitor safeguarding processes closely and leaders ensure that appropriate checks on the suitability of staff are carried out. Leaders record safeguarding concerns and the consequent actions they take meticulously. Leaders ensure that external agencies are contacted when needed. If support from external agencies is not timely or appropriate, leaders are relentless in ensuring that the right decisions are made and the correct support is available.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. In a few subjects, knowledge has not been selected or organised with enough precision.

Leaders are taking action to further improve the curriculum in these subjects. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied.

- Too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent. This means that these pupils find it more difficult to catch up with their peers. Leaders should review and revise their systems for improving attendance, so that all pupils attend school regularly.

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	145925
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10229110
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Norman Hunter Rose
Headteacher	Just Jeffrey
Website	www.downsbrook.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The principal joined the school in September 2018.
- The school joined the Schoolsworks Academy Trust in April 2018.
- No pupils currently attend alternative provision.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, trustees, and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- On the first day of the inspection, inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. This meant that in each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited

lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in other subjects.

- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 33 staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils from meetings and informal conversations and from the 24 pupils who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 102 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire and 81 parents who provided free-text comments.

Inspection team

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