

Inspection of an outstanding school: Downderry Primary School

Downderry Road, Downham, Bromley, Kent BR1 5QL

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 May 2022

Outcome

Downderry Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Downderry thrive. They love being at school and enjoy working together and learning. The excellent standard of education, support for pupils' well-being and well-planned enrichment activities enable all pupils to flourish. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Leaders and staff have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know, do and remember. Their high expectations are reflected in pupils' consistently positive attitudes to learning. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about what they learn and the opportunities available to them. They enjoy attending a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including gardening, choir, library and football.

Adults and pupils treat everyone in the school community with respect and courtesy. Pupils are fully included in school life. They have many opportunities to take on leadership roles, including as 'goodwill ambassadors' and 'climate change makers'. Pupils talked with pride about their school council and about how their opinions help shape the life of the school.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils said bullying is very rare. Adults are quick to help solve any problems, and pupils know this. Pupils feel safe and happy at school. Parents value the care and support shown to pupils and families. They appreciate the way that pupils' mental health and well-being are prioritised.

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

Leaders have planned a curriculum that is well considered and ambitious for all pupils. Teachers ensure pupils know and remember what they are taught so they are ready for what they will learn next. Pupils' learning over time is assessed purposefully. Subjects are designed to engage and excite pupils. Pupils use electronic devices and applications innovatively to conduct and organise aspects of their learning.

Leaders and staff prioritise reading. All staff are well trained in delivering the planned phonics programme effectively. The books pupils read match the sounds they learn. In the early years, children get off to a good start to their reading. For example, as children play, they readily retell and act out familiar stories, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. Teachers plan carefully for those pupils who fall behind in reading by providing extra support to help them catch up quickly. Pupils learn to love reading. They enjoy their library sessions and class story times. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the fiction and non-fiction books they have read. They are able to compare authors and can express preferences for different genres.

The curriculum puts a strong focus on developing vocabulary in all subjects. Across the school, pupils use the correct terminology when talking about specific subjects. For example, children in Reception use the correct vocabulary to identify the pulse and tempo of a musical composition. In Year 4 science, pupils practise classifying plants using a dichotomous chart and explaining its meaning.

The curriculum is broad and engaging. Leaders have carefully sequenced the important concepts they expect pupils to learn and remember. As a result, pupils draw confidently on previous knowledge when learning new subject content. This means that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND receive excellent support from staff. Provision is put in place quickly to make sure that the needs of pupils are identified and met from when they start school. Careful thought is given to ensuring that these pupils access the full curriculum. For example, additional support and resources, such as electronic 'voice notes', enable pupils to record what they know and remember.

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and stay focused in lessons. They behave exceptionally well across the school. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures and the democratic system. Pupils take on many responsibilities in school. The recent Retrofit Action For Tomorrow (RAFT) project has enabled pupils and staff to consider ways of reducing the school's carbon footprint. Educational visits, for example to the Royal Observatory and Leeds Castle, broaden pupils' experience. Pupils' wider development is well promoted by leaders and staff.

Governors work well with leaders. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities. Staff are very proud to be part of the team. They spoke about the school being a community where everyone is considered and said that their workload is well managed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety is prioritised. Leaders know pupils exceptionally well and take prompt action to safeguard all pupils. Leaders work closely with other agencies and professionals to ensure pupils and families receive timely help. All pre-employment staff checks are carried

out thoroughly. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training. They know their responsibility to report any concerns.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils said they feel safe in school and know how to raise any concerns with staff. They are knowledgeable about keeping safe online. The school is aware of local area risks and prepares pupils well for transition to secondary school.

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 May 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	100679
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10227084
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	474
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Elliot
Headteacher	David Gifford
Website	www.downderryprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in 2018.
- The school offers before- and after-school care five days a week for pupils who attend the school.
- 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including members of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: reading, music and science. The inspector met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read. Meetings with pupils and teachers to gather their views were also held. The inspector also considered some other curriculum subjects as part of the inspection.

- The inspector reviewed safeguarding arrangements by scrutinising records, talking to leaders and staff and through discussions with pupils. The inspector also considered pupils' behaviour and work to support pupils' wider development.
- The views of parents, carers and staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Frances Hawkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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