

Inspection of a good school: The Sibsey Free Primary School

Main Road, Sibsey, Boston, Lincolnshire PE22 0RR

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

The Sibsey Free Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this school. They describe it as 'amazing' and 'brilliant'. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive. One captured the sentiments of many when they wrote, 'Sibsey truly is a fabulous school with amazing teachers and support staff. It is like a second home where children feel safe to be themselves, learn and achieve.' The school radiates a warm, friendly and inclusive ethos, known as the 'Sibsey family'.

Expectations are high. Pupils respond consistently well to them. They are polite and courteous. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and trusting, including in the early years. Staff go the extra mile to provide pupils with support when they need it.

Pupils behave consistently well. They say that bullying has no place in their school. Pupils are confident staff will deal with any worries immediately. Pupils say that they feel safe. They know the school's values 'Be brave, be kind, be brilliant, be honest and be yourself', which they embrace.

Pupils enjoy school and work hard. They achieve well in most subjects. Classrooms are busy and purposeful.

Pupils celebrate each other's achievements in a wide range of clubs and activities, including sports, art and music. Many pupils participate in additional activities to support their local community.

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

Leaders and staff know, and are ambitious for, every pupil. They want all pupils to succeed. Leaders have created a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. They have ensured that the curriculum in each subject starts in the early years and ends in Year 6. In most subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge they want pupils to learn and when. However, in a small number of subjects, it is not clear precisely what knowledge leaders intend pupils to learn.

Children in the early years make a positive start at school. Staff's expectations for these children are high from day one. They have thought well about how they can help pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for Year 1. Children focus on their learning, for example in developing their knowledge of numbers and in understanding how to follow specific instructions. Children learn in well-resourced indoor and outdoor spaces.

The teaching of phonics and early reading is strong. Leaders promote a love of reading. Pupils enjoy reading books and are keen to participate in story time, anticipating what comes next. Staff, including support staff, are well trained in, and passionate about, helping pupils to learn to read. They read to pupils with flair. All staff use a systematic approach to teaching reading, which starts at the beginning of Reception. Books are carefully matched to the sounds pupils are learning. Pupils use their phonics knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. They demonstrate perseverance when reading tricky words. Through the daily checks they undertake, staff identify those pupils who need extra help. Teachers quickly provide this support.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They use this well to question pupils about their learning. In mathematics, for example, teachers adapt what they teach in response to pupil feedback. This helps pupils to become secure in their understanding. Sometimes, teachers ask pupils to correct their work without explaining why they should do so.

Leaders are quick to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They share information about these pupils with teachers. This ensures that teachers can support pupils with SEND well. Leaders engage effectively with parents and external agencies to ensure that these pupils receive the right support. Leaders regularly review the support plans for these pupils. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds also receive effective support.

The school's motto, 'Today is the best preparation for tomorrow', is evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils prepare well for life in modern Britain. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility in getting to know younger pupils during weekly 'talk together' time. Pupils learn to be respectful of what makes people different. One pupil's poem captured this eloquently when they wrote, 'Best of all our school says just 'be yourself', what a legacy that teaches us, that our individuality is our wealth.'

Leaders and governors know the school well. They have an accurate view of its strengths and how it can develop further. Governors provide leaders with appropriate challenge and support. Staff morale is high. Leaders are considerate of staff well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. This culture permeates throughout the school and into the local community. Staff, pupils and parents look out for one another. Staff are well trained in how to keep pupils safe and understand their responsibilities. They keep a close eye on pupils' emotional well-being, using the school's

'Sibsey scale'. Leaders act tenaciously to ensure that pupils receive the right support when they need it. They work well with external agencies, including social care, health services and the police. Record-keeping is detailed. The oversight of pupils in the care of the local authority is strong.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, leaders have identified the knowledge that they want pupils to learn and when. In some subjects, this is less clear. In these subjects, teachers do not know precisely what knowledge they should teach and when. Moreover, they are not always sure what knowledge they should be checking to ensure that pupils build their knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that the knowledge that pupils should learn, and the sequence in which they should learn it, is clear across all subjects, so that teachers can fully support pupils to develop their understanding over time.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

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.

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	120628
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10211543
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	173
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Paul Cartwright
Headteacher	Graeme Wright
Website	www.sibseyprimaryschool.squarespace.com
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- The Bright Sparks Kindergarten Ltd is located on the same site as The Sibsey Free Primary School. This provider was not visited as part of the inspection.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other members of the school's leadership team.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair. He spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: phonics and early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, he 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 reviewed

curriculum documentation for a range of other subjects, including science, computing, geography, history and music.

- The inspector listened to pupils from key stage 1 and Year 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads, including the headteacher, and considered safeguarding records. He also considered the single central record. The inspector checked staff knowledge of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, as well as the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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