

Inspection of an outstanding school: Great Bentley Primary School

Plough Road, Great Bentley, Colchester, Essex CO7 8LD

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 November 2022

Outcome

Great Bentley Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders expect nothing but the best from pupils. They live up to these expectations and develop wide ranging knowledge, skills, and experiences. Pupils love coming to school and learn extremely well. Pupils celebrate differences between themselves and others. They know that everyone is different but, no matter what their beliefs, religion or background, they treat each other as individuals.

Throughout the school, pupils behave extremely well. They are polite and are kind to one another. Pupils with additional responsibilities delight in carrying out these tasks. The librarians, school council and prefects are rightly proud of their roles. These opportunities support pupils to grow into active citizens.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, such as photography, choir and gardening. Trips and visits are planned carefully to make sure they further enhance pupils' quality of education.

Bullying is rare. If it happens, pupils know they can rely on adults to help put a stop to it quickly and keep them safe. From a young age, children develop independence. As they grow older, their self-control and motivation to learn is such that adults trust them to work with increasing independence.

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

Pupils receive an exceptional education at Great Bentley Primary School. Because of the highly respectful relationships that have been built, the whole school community works in harmony to be the best they can. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they are confident, articulate and knowledgeable young people.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that precisely identifies the knowledge pupils need to know and by when. Pupils revise important ideas as they move through the school. Their work across the curriculum is of an excellent standard. Pupils develop a deep and detailed

knowledge and achieve highly. Pupils learn and use a wide vocabulary. Consequently, they clearly articulate their thoughts, views and ideas across a wide range of different subjects.

Reading sits at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers because the school's phonics programme is extremely well taught. Those pupils who find reading tricky are helped to catch up very quickly. Older pupils read and listen to a wide range of high-quality texts. In weekly assemblies, pupils hear adults read snippets from different books. This excites them. They want to read more and develop a real love for reading.

Teachers provides pupils with carefully designed activities that help them practise and apply their new learning. Staff make regular checks to ensure pupils remember new knowledge. This helps pupils to build their knowledge steadily as they progress through the school. For example, children in Reception are fluent in identifying different numbers. This helps them become proficient at adding and subtracting. Older pupils have rapid recall of mathematical facts and different calculation strategies they have learned over time. They draw on these with ease to help solve more complex problems.

The specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified accurately. The curriculum that pupils with SEND learn is precisely matched to their needs. Adults skilfully adapt activities and the way they present information, meaning pupils with SEND access the same rich curriculum as their peers. These pupils, too, learn exceptionally well.

The school's well-being programme helps pupils to become resilient when faced with challenges and to grow their self-confidence. This exemplary work has been shared widely with schools across the county.

Provision for pupils' personal development is highly effective. Every pupil learns to read music and play a musical instrument by the time they leave the school. The 'junior coach award' allows older pupils to train in becoming a sports coach and go on to lead sporting activities with younger pupils. The choir performs regularly, including at Wembley Arena.

Pupils have incredibly positive attitudes toward their learning, meaning lessons are rarely disturbed. Pupils behave extremely well and older pupils act as exemplary role models for younger pupils.

Leaders take great care to manage staff workload. Teachers receive high-quality training that helps them continually refine their practice. Staff are proud to work at Great Bentley Primary School.

Governors carry out their roles with great diligence. They have an accurate view of the school's many strengths. However, they do not rest on their laurels. They challenge leaders to make further improvements and visit the school regularly to check how well pupils learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance. Adults are well trained to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Pupils also know they can talk to an adult if they are concerned about a friend. If pupils need extra help, leaders make sure they receive this quickly. They do not hesitate to contact external agencies if more help is needed. Keeping pupils safe is leaders' top priority. All pre-employment checks are carried out on staff and recorded thoroughly.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They know the risks they face, especially when using the internet, and the steps they can take to protect themselves.

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 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in September 2015.

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	114736
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10199449
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shirley Young
Headteacher	Tracey Caffull
Website	www.greatbentley.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 and 30 September, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation of local schools with Frinton-on-Sea Primary School and Elmstead Primary School. The headteacher is also the executive headteacher of these two schools.
- The school does not currently use 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector evaluated the school's curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about several other subjects.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of the governing body. The inspector held a telephone meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record, and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspector spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, governors, and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in school.
- The inspector considered responses and free-text comments to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, along with responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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