

Inspection of Patcham Infant School

Highview Avenue South, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 8WW

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 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	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Patcham Infant School there is a strong culture of appreciating and embracing individual liberty. Pupils take part wholeheartedly in inclusive activities such as wheelchair basketball and blind football. Most pupils describe their school as a 'super friendly place where everyone is welcome'.

Through the school's 'Rainbow Rights and Responsibilities' values, pupils learn about citizenship. They go out of their way to help and support others. Pupils know that if they have any worries they can go to their 'helpful hand', five trusted adults, straight away. Staff deal with any issues effectively. Bullying is not tolerated and incidents of unkindness are rare.

Leaders have high expectations. Pupils listen carefully and contribute maturely to discussions. As a result, most pupils learn well. The school's 'learning characters' play an important role in helping pupils develop skills such as perseverance and teamwork. Pupils enjoy learning to take risks in the forest school. They look forward to trips to places such as the Hove Museum and RHS Wisley.

The vast majority of parents are full of praise for the school. One parent summed up the views of many by describing the school as a 'wonderful place for our children to learn and grow'.

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

The provision for pupils' personal development is a strength in this school. Pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law. For instance, they vote for their peers who represent their views as members of the school council. Pupils debate and consider responsibly different views and understand that others may have different opinions from their own. They learn about different cultures and religions. One pupil said, 'Although we are all different on the outside, we are the same on the inside.' Pupils know about healthy relationships. They learn how to be healthy in mind and body. For example, pupils practise yoga and mindfulness to help them regulate their emotions. Pupils make a positive contribution to the local community and organise fundraising events to collect donations for charities and the local foodbank.

Reading plays a central role in the curriculum. Staff foster in pupils a love of reading. Across the school, during daily story time, there is a palpable sense of excitement as teachers bring to life the characters in books. Children in the early years cannot wait to read and share their favourite stories. Staff use their expert training effectively. They ensure that the books pupils read help them to practise the sounds they learn. Teachers ensure that pupils who are falling behind get the help they need to keep up and become fluent and confident readers.

The curriculum from early years upwards is interesting, engaging and ambitious. In all subjects, leaders have precisely identified the order in which pupils should learn

the essential knowledge. There is a real focus on oracy and developing language, which is embedded throughout the school. In most subjects, teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this to carefully plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning. This ensures pupils make links to strengthen their understanding. However, in a few subjects, some teachers lack the subject knowledge to be able to do this effectively. The activities they plan do not always take into account the learning that has come before. This means that the tasks pupils complete do not always match the intended curriculum. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Staff accurately identify and provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Across the curriculum, most staff are adept at checking for gaps in pupils' knowledge. Nevertheless, some staff do not check and make sure that pupils, including pupils with SEND, have understood the important ideas taught before introducing new concepts. Consequently, pupils do not always learn as well as they could.

Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to their learning. They look forward to lessons and are highly motivated. This starts in the early years, where children quickly learn routines and become increasingly independent. Children share resources and are keen to help by tidying their toys away. In older year groups, pupils work hard and take a pride in their work. At playtimes and around school, staff monitor and support pupils well.

Governors are ambitious for all pupils to succeed. They understand the school's strengths and what needs to improve further in the quality of education. Staff appreciate the care and consideration given to them by leaders. All staff are fully committed to the school and share leaders' dedication to supporting the pupils and their families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take their responsibilities very seriously and know what to do if they are worried about a pupil. They report any welfare concerns promptly. Leaders take swift and effective action in response to these concerns. However, records do not always fully include the details of their decisions. This does not put children at risk. When it is appropriate to do so, leaders work with other organisations to ensure families receive the support they need.

Pupils learn how to keep safe through their effective personal, social and health education learning. They understand how to stay safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' subject knowledge across different subjects is variable. As a result, sometimes the activities planned by teachers do not help pupils build on what they know already. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise to teach the intended curriculum effectively.
- Teachers, including in the early years, do not always accurately check what pupils know before introducing new ideas. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers know what they should be checking pupils understand and do so in a timely way.
- Processes for recording safeguarding incidents are not as robust as they could be. Leaders need to make sure that systems are in place that enable them to review all aspects of the school's work easily to keep pupils safe.

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	114373
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10242307
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Skeet
Headteacher	Chris Taylor
Website	www.patchaminf.brighton-hove.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2008

Information about this school

- The governing body manages before-school childcare provision.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe. Inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead about the recording and reporting of safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors met some parents to gather their views on the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

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