

Inspection of a good school: Eaton Valley Primary School

Dagger Lane, West Bromwich, West Midlands B71 4BU

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

Eaton Valley Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Eaton Valley Primary School is a happy, friendly place where pupils enjoy learning and finding out about the world around them. This is a school where every pupil is fully included in everything that the school has to offer.

Pupils are safe in school. They know that the adults look after them. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They understand what bullying is. If bullying should happen, adults in school quickly make sure that it stops. Pupils learn about, understand, and celebrate difference. They show tolerance and understanding of others. Pupils and staff model the school mantra of 'all different; all equal'.

Leaders, staff and governors want the very best for every pupil, and pupils live up to these high expectations. Leaders are keen for pupils to learn about resilience. Pupils talk confidently about how they use 'growth mindset' when learning is tricky. Leaders are continuing to develop the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious for all pupils.

Pupils relish the opportunities available to them in school. From voting for room names to applying for jobs within school or being on the school council, pupils are being well prepared for life both in West Bromwich and modern Britain.

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

In recent years, new leaders have introduced a vision that runs through the heart of everything in school. 'Love who we are, love learning, aim high' inspires all pupils to do their very best. The 'curriculum promise' has been carefully planned so that pupils experience a wide range of opportunities. The curriculum also reflects the diversity of the school community.

Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2022 were low. However, leaders had already made changes to the curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious for all pupils. It is

rooted in enabling all pupils to succeed. Improvements made, particularly in reading and mathematics, have enabled current pupils to make good progress through the curriculum. Also, support for subject leaders has also had a demonstrable positive impact in the delivery of the curriculum. Leaders ensure that teachers regularly check pupils' progress. For example, in every mathematics lesson, teachers check pupils' previous learning. Where pupils have not fully understood, they quickly receive the support they need. However, in some subjects, leaders' clear vision is not yet fully embedded. In these subjects, teachers are not clear about why the curriculum is organised in the way it is. As a result, activities do not always enable pupils to build on what they already know or prepare them for what is to come next.

The curriculum in the early years is carefully adapted to develop children's curiosity in the world around them. For example, after finding nests in the school's 'Bunny's Wood' area, children learned all about owls. Children in the early years are immersed in stories, rhymes and songs. This means that they are ready to start learning to read as soon as they start in Reception.

Leaders ensure that books and reading are at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils practise reading, using books which are carefully matched to the sounds they are learning. Pupils' reading knowledge is assessed regularly, and leaders ensure that pupils receive help to catch up if needed. Leaders have identified that staff's expertise could be developed even further so that all staff can effectively support all pupils, including older pupils who are struggling with reading.

Leaders are quick to identify when pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work with a range of external agencies, including a local professional football club, to ensure that pupils with SEND are very well supported. Pupils with SEND are fully included in school life. They also receive very effective personalised provision. Leaders are passionate that no child is left behind. As a result, pupils with SEND learn, play and enjoy all that the school has to offer, alongside their classmates.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff create a fun but purposeful learning environment. For example, teachers clearly enjoy learning to skip at breaktime with pupils. Pupils relish spontaneous dances in the corridor with staff before settling quickly to their learning.

Leaders are keen to offer all pupils, including those with SEND, a wide range of deliberately planned activities to enrich their education and prepare them for life. For example, older pupils can complete job applications for meaningful jobs around school. Other pupils sit on 'selection committees' to match applicants to job descriptions. These pupils then work to earn 'Eaton Valley Pounds' which they can spend on a range of experiences, including extra time in 'Bunny's Wood'. Pupils also benefit from initiatives such as working with an organisation which promotes learning about food, farming and the countryside.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are mindful of staff well-being. Staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is exemplary at Eaton Valley. Leaders and staff know the pupils and their families well. They are acutely aware of potential risks and are relentless in ensuring that pupils and families receive the right support, at the right time, to keep them safe.

Leaders use external support, where needed. They are not afraid to challenge decisions, to ensure the very best outcomes for pupils.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained. Staff are vigilant and report all concerns about pupils, no matter how small. Record keeping is meticulous. Leaders also ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In phonics, leaders have identified some opportunities to further develop staff expertise. However, some of these opportunities have yet to have the impact leaders intend. Leaders should continue to develop the expertise of all staff, including those who support older pupils who are at the earlier stages of learning to read, so that all pupils gain the phonics knowledge they need to become fluent readers.
- Leaders are continuing to develop their curriculum. In some subjects, senior leaders' strong vision is not yet fully understood by all teachers and subject leaders. As a result, teachers' understanding of how the curriculum is sequenced so that pupils build on what they learn is not yet fully embedded. Leaders should continue to ensure that all subject leaders and teachers understand how the curriculum is constructed, in order that they can enable pupils to know more and remember more, 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

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	103923
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10257000
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	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bill McLoughlin
Headteacher	Claire Evans
Website	http://www.eatonvalley.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school offers a breakfast club on site.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans where they were available, 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 listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinators and pastoral leaders.
- The inspector held meetings with the chair and representatives of the local governing body and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke to pupils about pupils' behaviour.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks, looked at safeguarding records and talked to pupils and staff.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parent free-text responses. The inspector also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector talked to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Rachel Henrick, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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