

Inspection of an outstanding school: The Brent Primary School

London Road, Stone, Dartford, Kent DA2 6BA

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that staff have for them. Leaders have created a curriculum that is designed to 'Ignite Ambition Through Learning', and this has largely been achieved. Pupils are confident in talking about what they have learned, and they look forward to what they will learn next. Pupils behave well and staff expect this of them. Pupils rarely disrupt lessons, and teachers deal with it well if they do. Classrooms are calm, and there are positive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils know that they are looked after and who they can go to if they need help. Their safety, including their mental and physical health, is taken seriously by leaders.

Bullying is very rare, but if it does occur is addressed immediately. Pupils are happy, and they enjoy the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that leaders have organised for them. Many of these activities are designed to promote character development and an appreciation of diversity. Pupils are respectful of differences. As one pupil said: 'It is not only OK to be different here, we celebrate it. It makes the school better because we are all different.'

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

Leaders have created a highly ambitious curriculum in which careful thought has been given to what pupils should learn and when. However, in a minority of subjects, the curriculum is not as broad as it would need to be to reach these high ambitions. For example, in history, the curriculum does not cover areas that leaders have identified to be important. Teachers make sure that the curriculum is accessible to all, and they work with the special educational needs coordinator to put in place targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is effective because staff are well trained by leaders to identify the needs that their pupils have. Leaders monitor the support carefully to check that it works as intended.

Reading and mathematics are particular strengths in the school. Leaders have made reading a priority. Staff put in place timely and effective interventions to support any pupils who are struggling to read. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to talk about their favourite books and authors. Leaders in mathematics have made sure that there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their fluency with numbers. Teachers make time for pupils to apply mathematics in a range of different subjects. Leaders have acted quickly to address the dip in results following the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of this response was to bring in a new form of assessment. This allows teachers to quickly identify gaps in what pupils have learned. Teachers then adjust their lessons to help close these gaps. Leaders have made sure that these changes have not increased workload, and teachers are positive about the support that they receive from leaders.

Staff in early years are also skilled in identifying how children are progressing and then adjusting activities to help meet their needs. Teachers plan these activities very well. They make sure that they are enticing to children and that the children know how to get the most from them. Lessons elsewhere in the school are usually well thought out and lead to pupils learning well. However, at times, pupils lack the knowledge to make sense of the activities they are being asked to complete, and they then develop misconceptions.

The classrooms have been carefully designed to be calm learning environments and disruption from poor behaviour is very rare. In Reception Year, children are taught about appropriate behaviour. Staff model how to behave in different situations and children are given the chance to practise how they would behave. This approach to helping pupils manage their own behaviour continues throughout the school.

Leaders take the wider development of pupils very seriously. They have carefully planned out a programme for personal, social, health and economic education, and they enrich this with assemblies, talks and visits. These are adapted by leaders to respond to the needs of pupils as they arise. Teachers plan lessons with the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in mind. Pupils are confident in discussing their culture and the cultures of others, and they have a strong appreciation of moral issues. Leaders have also introduced elements of careers education. They use this as an opportunity to engage the wider community and to show pupils the range of possibilities open to them in the future. Pupils also have opportunities to work with the local community through the charity work that they engage in.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are very well trained to identify pupils who may be at risk. The processes for logging concerns are rigorous and closely monitored. Leaders are then persistent in securing the help that pupils need from other agencies. Teachers manage safeguarding risks very well, and they teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. This work begins in Reception Year and continues throughout the school. There is a strong curriculum for online safety, and leaders respond to specific safeguarding needs in the local community as they arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, the curriculum does not meet the high ambition of leaders. As a result, pupils sometimes lack the depth of knowledge that will help them to learn more in the future. Leaders should review the scope of their curriculum to check that what is taught matches their intention.
- Pupils do not always have the necessary component knowledge that they need to successfully complete an activity they have been given. This leads to them developing misconceptions about the knowledge they are learning or the subjects more generally. Teachers should consider what pupils need to know in advance of a lesson so that they can make sense of what they will learn next.

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 March 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	140592
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256419
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	622
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Larissa Cesar
Headteacher	Sarah Rye
Website	www.brent.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2017

Information about this school

- This school has had a change in leadership since the last inspection and has joined Cygnus Academies Trust.
- The school has increased in size recently from a two-form to a three-form entry.
- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with a trustee, a local governor and officers of the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, the 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.

- The single central record was checked, and the inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and members of the safeguarding team about their approaches to safeguarding. They also sampled case studies and documentation and spoke with a range of staff and pupils about their knowledge of safeguarding.
- The inspectors met with a range of staff and considered their views through the confidential online staff survey.
- The inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school, in lessons and at playtime. The inspectors met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Mark Enser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sam French

Ofsted Inspector

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