

Inspection of a good school: Westdene Primary School

Bankside, Westdene, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 5GN

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Westdene Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is an incredibly strong sense of family and community in Westdene Primary School. All staff have high expectations of pupils, and pupils rise to meet these exceptionally well. Pupils are proud to attend the school and to contribute to making it successful. Pupils greet visitors readily and are keen to talk about their school and its unique features such as recently achieving the Platinum Arts Mark award which pupils talk about with pride.

Around the school site, behaviour is calm including during social times. Pupils move purposefully between lessons as they are keen to get going with their learning. This is a highly inclusive school. Pupils talk confidently about why it is important that everyone is valued and can offer their own contributions to making their school better.

Pupils feel safe in this school and bullying is exceptionally rare. Pupils are confident that, were it to happen, it would be dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils know how to report any concerns or worries that they have, for example the 'worry boxes' are used to help pupils ask questions. However, pupils are confident that they can speak to staff directly if they need to, which is indicative of the warm and supportive relationships they have with staff.

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

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have planned a highly effective curriculum right from the early years that is well considered and maps out what pupils need to know. Leaders reflect on this curriculum continually and are always adapting it to best meet the needs of their pupils.

In lessons, teachers use precise questioning and other methods to gauge what pupils know. This is exceptionally strong. They encourage pupils to think and consider deeply.

Pupils, right from the early years, are confident in discussing what they are learning and can connect this to learning that has come before. This means that pupils can see how their learning builds over time. Staff use information from their careful assessment of what pupils understand and remember, to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. This ensures that pupils learn more and remember more over time. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well in end of key stage assessments and across other subjects.

Reading is taught especially well. Staff enthuse pupils about reading and pupils enjoy it, talking with pride about the books they have read and the recognition, such as the headteacher's award, that they receive for working hard and making progress. The phonics programme is taught precisely by all staff. They assess pupils' understanding to identify the precise gaps that pupils have and provide very well-considered support sessions that help pupils to become increasingly fluent and confident readers.

In early years, children respond to the clear routines in place and work well together in both indoor and outdoor provision. This same focused and engaged behaviour in lessons is seen across the whole school. Pupils enjoy thinking hard and grappling with challenging ideas. They are encouraged to become increasingly independent in their learning. Importantly, staff are adept at knowing when to support and when to stand back, particularly with those pupils with SEND who have the most significant needs.

Nothing in this school happens by accident. Leaders are continually reflective and take carefully considered steps to refine their offer for pupils, while considering staff workload in their plans. This is evident in the work to develop the curriculum, as well as that to further the personal development of pupils beyond the classroom. For example, leaders provide pupils with access to a broad range of rich cultural experiences. Recent events include a visit to the national opera and participation in a dance festival. There is also a wealth of leadership opportunities for pupils, open to all from the youngest years upwards. Pupils contribute to the school council, fundraise with the Junior Friends of Westdene, are part of the gardening committee, act as play leaders for younger pupils, and are ambassadors in mathematics, reading and science. Pupils thrive on these opportunities, and take their responsibilities seriously, as they can see how their actions help shape their school community. For example, pupils talked with pride about how their recent fundraising had led to improvements in the school play equipment.

The range of extra-curricular clubs is similarly exceptionally strong and includes interesting options such as samba band, STEM club, philosophy and fencing. Pupils engage with these opportunities readily, and pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged benefit significantly from the array of opportunities available. Pupils also benefit from a range of additional curriculum sessions outside of their taught lessons.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in this school.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and there is a well-considered programme for pupils on online safety. Leaders ensure that all staff have the relevant training to help them identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know their pupils well and are swift to report any concerns. Governors and trustees ensure that leaders take the right steps to check that adults are safe to work in the school. Staff liaise effectively with external agencies and ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need.

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 July 2013.

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	114380
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10256487
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	579
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charles Haywood
Headteacher	Debbie Crossingham
Website	www.westdeneprimary.co.uk/brighton-hove/primary/westdene
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and music. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector listened to some pupils read to adults they knew. Additionally, the inspector looked at planning and pupils' work across other areas of the curriculum.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector held meetings with safeguarding leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. The inspector scrutinised the single central record and checked safeguarding records.
- The inspector also took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes. They also considered external reports of the school from the local authority, as well as stakeholder engagement surveys undertaken by the school.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. The inspector took account of parent and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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