

Inspection of a good school: Biggin Hill Primary School

Old Tye Avenue, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent TN16 3LY

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

Biggin Hill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this welcoming and friendly school. Pupils take pride in being responsible. Through the school's equality, diversity and inclusion committee, school council and eco-council, pupils help to improve the school. For example, as a result of pupils' suggestions, leaders have provided a 'buddy bench' where pupils can sit if they would like someone to play with them at breaktime.

Pupils enjoy school and are well supported both personally and academically. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Beginning in early years, teachers think carefully about each pupil's starting point and help them succeed.

Pupils treat one another with kindness and respect. They focus on their classwork and do not disturb others' learning. Pupils are proud to model the school's values. They are excited to win badges that reward their positive behaviour. Parents and carers are regularly invited to celebrate pupils' successes during special assemblies.

Leaders organise a range of opportunities to support pupils' personal development, including choir, coding and craft clubs. Pupils are enthusiastic about competing as part of their netball and football teams. 'Buzz days' offer pupils memorable experiences, such as taking afternoon tea with grandparents to learn about toys from the past.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. They have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn in every subject and about how pupils' knowledge will build over time, beginning in early years. For example, children in early years spend time learning about what life is like in a country from each continent. This prepares them for making detailed comparisons between their own local area and several unfamiliar places in geography later on.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They choose activities that are well suited to help pupils to learn new content. For example, in mathematics, teachers regularly ask pupils to try more than one way to get to an answer. This helps pupils to understand which methods are the most efficient. However, teachers do not routinely help pupils to recall what they have learned before and to use that knowledge to help them understand new ideas. As a result, pupils sometimes find it harder to make sense of new content than they might.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions left its mark on academic performance at the end of Year 6 in 2022. Despite teachers' attempts to recover pupils' lost learning in reading, the gaps that had developed were too wide. This is no longer the case. Leaders have made recent changes to their approach to teaching reading, including training staff to deliver the chosen phonics programme to pupils at the early stages of reading. Pupils gain the phonic knowledge they need to read fluently, including those who have fallen behind.

Teachers assess pupils' understanding skilfully and identify any gaps in their learning. They use a range of methods to check how well pupils have grasped important content. They adapt further teaching carefully to build precisely on pupils' prior knowledge.

From early years onwards, leaders swiftly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND get the support they need without delay. Teachers make adaptations in the classroom, so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are taught how to behave in the 'Biggin Hill Way' by demonstrating the school's values, such as respect and treating everyone fairly and equally. Pupils are motivated to move up the 'behaviour track', to win house points and to take a golden sticker home. Early years is a nurturing place where children are taught to take turns and treat each other with kindness.

Leaders provide thoughtful teaching about relationships, health, well-being and the wider world. In all areas of the curriculum, pupils are taught about people from a variety of different backgrounds, for example through being taught about the contributions of scientists of different ethnicities, nationalities and genders. Pupils are taught about different religions and about the importance of respect for different ways of life in modern Britain. Leaders encourage pupils to attend school regularly. However, attendance rates show that some pupils are frequently absent from school and miss out on valuable learning.

Parents, staff and pupils expressed a great deal of confidence in the headteacher's decisive and caring leadership. The governing body and leaders at all levels carefully check how well pupils' needs are met. They work closely with families. Staff felt well supported and that their workload is carefully considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to raise concerns regarding the safety of a pupil. Staff take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously. They are vigilant and report issues without delay.

Leaders undertake specialist training frequently and have strong expertise about the risks to pupils. They make referrals to external support when appropriate. Leaders provide a wealth of support opportunities, including information and support groups for parents.

Leaders teach pupils how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils know to talk to teachers with responsibility for safeguarding if they have a concern. They also make use of the 'worry boxes' in classrooms.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not routinely help pupils to recall relevant prior learning and make links to new knowledge. As a result, new content that pupils learn does not build on what they already know as precisely as it might. Leaders should ensure that teachers help pupils to understand how new learning is linked to what they have learned previously.
- Some pupils have high levels of absence from school. As a result, they have not had the full benefit of the education offered by the school. Leaders should follow through on new procedures for monitoring pupils' absence to improve the attendance of this group.

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 June 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	137244
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10240321
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	439
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Laura Tully
Headteacher	Hannah Freeman
Website	www.bigginhillprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Charles Darwin Academy Trust.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum information in other subjects.

- The inspector considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health and safety as well as their welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector also met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- The inspector met with members of the local governing body and a trust representative.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils respectively.

Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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