

Inspection of a good school: Downsway Primary School

Warbreck Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG31 6FE

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

Downsway Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Downsway are happy, polite and caring towards one another. Leaders want every pupil to achieve well. They are also keen to ensure every individual develops the school values, which include curiosity, responsibility and self-belief.

Classrooms are calm and there is a purposeful atmosphere to learning during lessons. Pupils try hard when learning new and exciting things. They behave well in the dinner hall and outside in the busy but well-equipped play spaces. Pupils say they are happy and safe in school, and staff and parents agree. Pupils respect each other's similarities and differences. Leaders ensure that all pupils understand the impact prejudice can have on others. This helps to create a very inclusive school.

Leaders offer pupils of all ages a wide range of opportunities to develop talents and skills. Extra-curricular clubs support both physical and creative development. Pupils get many opportunities to perform in productions throughout their time at the school. There are many day trips related to the curriculum. Year 4 and Year 6 each have a residential experience away from home. Both these trips, while having significant pastoral benefits for all pupils, also have key learning embedded in them, such as history or geography.

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

Leaders have implemented an exciting and well-sequenced curriculum. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This helps pupils to learn and remember the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary in each subject. This begins in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) where pupils have a particularly strong start to their learning.

Leaders prioritise all pupils learning to read. All classroom staff teach phonics well. This enables most pupils to learn the individual sounds. Some pupils do find it hard to learn all the sounds, but teachers identify and support them quickly. The majority of pupils have reading books that they can read fluently and enjoy. However, a few pupils have a book

that is too hard and that they are finding too difficult to read. This means they are not learning to read with fluency and enjoyment as quickly as they could.

Across all subjects, pupils learn well because teachers deliver lessons with clarity. In the most effective lessons, teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning. This means pupils who might be stuck get the support they need. Occasionally, teachers leave it too long before moving pupils on to new learning, particularly in mathematics. At the end of units of work in each subject, teachers gain useful information about how well pupils have learned the curriculum. However, leaders are not always using this information to steer the content of future units of lessons. This means teaching is not always as well targeted as it could be, to help all pupils learn as much as they could.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. 'Support and achievement plans' for these pupils are succinct and clear. This is because leaders and classroom staff know the needs of individual pupils. The learning for pupils with more complex SEND is sometimes completed away from the classroom. When this happens, the learning is similar to that taking place in the main classroom, but in an environment that is better suited to the needs of the individual pupils.

Pupils' behaviour around the school is respectful and kind. Children in EYFS are considerate to each other and use equipment with care. Leaders set the example of good behaviour and all staff model how pupils should behave. Should a pupil struggle to stay calm, leaders ensure that they receive support to help get it right next time. Governors know the importance of good behaviour and have discussed this with the school council. This work has prompted the imminent introduction of some pupils becoming 'peer mediators' to help resolve any problems during outside play.

Leaders ensure that all pupils get wider opportunities to develop skills beyond the classroom. Sporting and cultural opportunities are popular, particularly the art club, which almost a quarter of all pupils take part in. Leaders provide a range of trips to enhance learning. This starts in EYFS with geographic fieldwork around the local area. Other examples through the school include when pupils have science-focused activities from 'Baylab' and 'Zoolab', and when Year 6 pupils visit a Battle of Britain bunker.

An effective, supportive and challenging governing body wants the best for all pupils and staff. Staff are proud to work at the school and there is high morale among the staff. This cohesiveness creates a culture which encourages achieving the best outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training to keep up to date on the risks that pupils might face in their lives. This helps to create a culture of safeguarding where staff are vigilant about any potential signs of harm to pupils. Leaders use secure reporting and recording systems. These enable leaders to identify and respond to concerns immediately.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. If they have a concern, they know they can talk to an adult. Pupils learn how to stay safe on the internet. For example, Year 6 pupils have learned the dangers of fake online profiles and online bullying.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Reading books are not always matched closely enough to a pupils' reading ability. This means that some of the younger pupils are unable to read independently without adult support. Leaders should support teachers to ensure that they are selecting reading books which have the sounds that pupils know well.
- In some subjects, leaders do not use the information they gather about how well pupils have learned the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary well enough. As a result, teaching is not always as precise as it could be and pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the assessment information they gather is used more precisely to plan future learning opportunities so all pupils can achieve the best they can in all areas of learning.

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 February 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	109896
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10256459
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Madeline Fyans
Headteacher	Katie Ayres
Website	www.downsway.w-berks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. The inspector also met with a representative of the local authority and other leaders within the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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.
- In addition, the inspector also looked at other curriculum areas, including art and personal, social and health education.

- The inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff, and through discussions with pupils.
- The inspector considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Chris Parker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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