

Inspection of a good school: Balgowan Primary School

Balgowan Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4HJ

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 May 2023

Outcome

Balgowan 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?

Leaders have developed a culture in the school where pupils are happy, confident and enjoy learning. Pupils are extremely proud of their school. Staff know all pupils very well and, as a result, they are safe and well supported.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils in the school. Pupils are hardworking, highly articulate and enjoy challenges in lessons. Pupils strive to be awarded 'values tokens' which they receive for showing school values, including resilience.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school site. Pupils are extremely kind to each other. Leaders ensure that pupils work together and respect differences of opinions. In the early years, staff fully prepare children for Year 1 by helping them to follow routines and instructions very well.

Pupils have access to an extremely broad range of wider opportunities in the school. These include various sports clubs, science, backgammon and cookery clubs. Leaders encourage and support all pupils to follow their interests, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to take part.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum that is ambitious for all, including pupils with SEND. It covers, and in places exceeds, the expectations of the national curriculum.

Leaders make sure that the curriculum for all subjects builds knowledge over time progressively. They ensure that pupils revisit key knowledge and skills regularly. This helps pupils to develop deep subject-specific understanding. For example, pupils in Year 2

learned about fractions before learning to tell the time. Teachers built on these firm foundations to help pupils in Year 5 to solve problems with time confidently.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and present information clearly. They use a variety of strategies to check pupils' understanding systematically. Teachers identify any misconceptions and address these swiftly. They support pupils to commit knowledge to their long-term memory. For instance, pupils have a firm understanding of key vocabulary and use prior knowledge to help them with new content. This means pupils are fully ready for future learning.

Leaders focus sharply on helping pupils to read from when children first join the school. They have ensured that the content of the phonics programme is appropriately structured and sequenced to support pupils' progress with reading. Leaders use pupils' assessment information very carefully to identify any pupil who is falling behind in phonics. Staff ensure that they help these pupils to catch up quickly with additional support.

Teachers read to all pupils every day. Books are well chosen to engage, challenge and help pupils to develop a love of reading. Leaders encourage all pupils to read for pleasure. Teachers provide pupils with a variety of high-quality books.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND effectively. They ensure that support is in place for each pupil so they can access the full curriculum. This support allows pupils with SEND to achieve highly.

Pupils' attitudes to their learning are exceptional. Leaders have clear systems in place to support all pupils so that behaviour across the school is calm and focused. This ensures that staff address any rare incidents of low-level disruption swiftly so that learning is not disrupted.

Leaders support pupils' broader development extremely well. They have designed a programme that teaches pupils how to be safe and healthy. Staff help pupils to develop their self-esteem.

Pupils participate in a range of visits linked to the curriculum. These include outings to various places of worship, museums and theatre workshops. Leaders encourage pupils to take on responsibilities, including as members of the school's active student council. Pupils take roles seriously such as sports ambassadors, library mentors and 'Balgowan buddies'.

Leaders look after the health and welfare of staff. They are conscious of the pressures of workload and explore strategies to minimise this where possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They ensure that effective systems are in place to identify any safeguarding concerns. Staff receive regular training and know how to report any worries should they occur.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They understand to share anything with adults that makes them feel upset. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need in a timely way.

Background

When we have judged 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	137216
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10268701
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	620
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Golding
Headteacher	Maria Veysey
Website	www.balgowan.bromley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school does not 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and a range of staff. They also met with members of the governing body and a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, discussed with pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The curriculum in other subjects was also considered.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leads, along with pupils and staff. The records of pre-employment checks and other relevant documentation were also reviewed.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Conway, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Franklin

Ofsted Inspector

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