

Inspection of a good school: Bentfield Primary School and Nursery

Rainsford Road, Stansted Mountfitchet, Stansted, Essex CM24 8DX

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

Bentfield Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive, friendly and welcoming school. Pupils and staff have respectful and positive relationships. Pupils enjoy school. They benefit from learning in a caring, safe environment.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are considerate of others and show respect, tolerance and understanding.

Pupils meet the school's high expectations by behaving well and working hard. They participate in lessons enthusiastically and want to do their best. This helps pupils to learn well from the Nursery upwards. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is enhanced by carefully planned visits, for example to different places of historical interest. These occasions give pupils the chance to ask questions and find out more. Pupils achieve well and leave Year 6 ready for secondary school.

Pupils enjoy a variety of school clubs and activities. These include dodgeball, arts and crafts, cookery, choir and girls' football. Pupils hold positions of responsibility as members of the school council and sports ambassadors. They are proud of their participation in the school's enterprise event where they raise money for a local charity.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. It sets out and breaks down the knowledge that pupils should learn and remember. This is organised in a logical order so that pupils' knowledge builds over time. This is particularly strong in English and mathematics, where what pupils should know at different times is identified precisely.

In subjects other than English and mathematics, the most important knowledge that pupils should learn and remember is not always as clearly identified. Teachers and subject leaders do not always know what they need to check to be sure that pupils are secure in

their understanding. Teachers do not always have the information they need to build effectively on what pupils already know. This slows pupils' progress.

Overall, staff have strong subject knowledge. They understand how pupils learn best. This enables pupils to learn well. Teachers typically ask searching questions to check pupils' learning. They usually address any misunderstandings pupils have quickly.

The school prioritises reading. In Nursery, children listen to, and learn, nursery rhymes and stories that develop their communication and language skills. Children in the early years begin learning to read as soon as they start school. Pupils learn phonics well. The books pupils read match the sounds they have learned. Pupils enjoy the school's new 'reading spine' initiative and the challenge that this has given them. Staff have the expertise to teach reading well. Teachers check pupils' progress in phonics effectively. If pupils fall behind, they receive the support they need to help them to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils learn to read confidently and fluently.

Pupils do not get enough high-quality opportunities to develop their writing across the curriculum. At times, pupils' writing lacks the depth and quality needed to show their understanding.

The school's inclusive nature is a strength. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Pupils with complex needs benefit from the school's inclusive curriculum. They learn among their peers and have work skilfully adapted to meet their needs. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Children get off to a strong start in early years. Adults engage meaningfully and purposefully with children. Many parents rightly express delight and confidence in their children's learning in early years.

The school supports pupils to attend well, follow routines and develop positive attitudes to learning. This starts in the early years, where children have excellent opportunities to play and learn. Every activity supports purposeful learning. Children learn to be curious, resilient and sociable as a result.

Pupils have a strong sense of equality. The school is inclusive and promotes respect for, and understanding of, diversity well. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the community, including when online. There are many opportunities for pupils beyond the academic curriculum, such as residential trips, school clubs and charity work. Pupils value these opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world.

School leaders ensure that all staff are supported. Leaders listen to staff views when making changes. This ensures that staff workload is manageable while ensuring that changes benefit pupils. Teachers value the training they receive. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They use their experience well to challenge and support leaders to make the school even better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not use assessment consistently enough to ensure that pupils are acquiring key knowledge and skills in the foundation subjects. This means that teachers and leaders do not have important information to inform their planning so that teachers can always help pupils to build effectively on previous learning. The school should ensure that teachers use checks on pupils' learning across all subjects to ensure they support, and plan for, pupils' learning effectively.
- Pupils do not get enough high-quality opportunities to develop and practise their writing across the curriculum. As a result, pupils' writing can lack sufficient depth and the quality of pupils' writing is variable. The school should ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop and practise using their writing knowledge so that their writing is of a consistently high quality across the curriculum.

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 April 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	114978
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10294942
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Black
Headteacher	David Rogers
Website	www.bentfieldprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The school offers 24 spaces for pupils with SEND who have complex health, physical and developmental needs. All of these pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many of these pupils have much more complex needs than those who are typically in mainstream education.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.

- The inspector spoke to members of the school’s governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education. Inspection activities in these subjects included lesson visits, discussions with staff and pupils, meeting with subject leaders and work scrutiny. The inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding arrangements and attendance. The inspector also reviewed the school’s evaluation of its own performance and the school’s improvement plan.
- To gather their views on the school, the inspector held informal and formal discussions with pupils and observed lunchtime.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including additional free-text comments. They also took account of responses to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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