

Inspection of a good school: Brandhall Primary School

Brennand Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 0SH

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 April 2024

Outcome

Brandhall Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Brandhall Primary School is a happy and friendly community. Pupils are warmly greeted to school each day by caring staff and Lolly the school dog. The school works closely with parents and carers. It has made sure that parents understand that children should attend school daily. This means that most pupils now attend school regularly and on time. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life. They value their teachers, who make learning fun. Pupils enjoy taking part in quizzes, particularly the 'Big Brandhall Quiz'. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned.

The school is calm and pupils are well behaved. Staff consistently apply the school's 'good to be green' approach to managing behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. The school resolves them using a restorative approach. This helps pupils to understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Classrooms are industrious places where pupils work hard and learn the curriculum well. Pupils feel safe at school.

Pupils have access to a range of enrichment opportunities. These include gardening, cooking, money matters and playing chess. These help pupils learn important life skills. Pupils enjoy attending many clubs, including gymnastics, choir, football and art club. This helps them to develop new talents and interests.

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

The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils. In most subjects, the curriculum is usually sequenced well so that learning builds on what pupils know and can do. Teachers have the knowledge they need to teach the curriculum well. They present learning in a way that engages and excites pupils. Staff make regular checks on pupils' learning in lessons and over time. They identify and address misconceptions quickly. However, in a few subjects, the sequence of learning is not as clear as it could be. This means that pupils do not build on previous learning as well as they could in these subjects.

Staff are highly skilled in teaching early reading and phonics. Pupils enjoy reading and they read regularly in school. Reading workshops help parents to support their child to read at home. A diverse range of high-quality books, the library, which pupils frequently access, author visits and a playtime 'suitcase library' promote reading well. Recent improvements have helped staff to identify swiftly any pupils who fall behind in their reading. Most of these pupils are supported effectively and catch up quickly. However, some pupils who struggle to read are not catching up as well as they should. They have fallen behind in their reading for a range of reasons. These pupils do not read with the confidence and fluency expected for their age.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. Staff work closely with parents so that they can identify what children know and can do. They carefully plan learning to build on children's prior knowledge and interests. Children practise and apply their learning when working independently. For example, they practise new letters and sounds using magnetic letters and sand. The 'farm shop' helps them to develop their speaking and counting skills. Children enjoy working together and making new friends. They take turns as they explore weighing in the mud kitchen and the water tray. All this helps to prepare children for the next stage of their education.

The school's work to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is rigorous. Staff are highly skilled in ensuring that they adapt learning to meet the needs of these pupils in lessons. Additional support and resources are available to those pupils who need them. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and that staff have sufficient training. As a result, pupils with SEND are successful in school. Parents are highly positive about this aspect of the school's work.

The school offers a rich set of experiences to help pupils broaden their experiences and interests. Leadership roles in school, such as prefects, eco-warriors and safeguarding ambassadors, help pupils develop important leadership and teamwork skills. Pupils vote for these roles, which helps them to understand democracy. Through the work of the school council, pupils learn about their right to a voice. They learn about different faiths and cultures and understand the importance of festivals and how these are celebrated. They are respectful of these.

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious. They want the very best for all pupils in school. They have an accurate view of the school and have identified the right areas for improvement. Leaders are mindful of finding ways to deal with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on some aspects of school life.

Staff love working at the school. They value the support from listening and supportive leaders to help them manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the sequence of learning in the curriculum is not as clear as it could be. This means that these subjects are sometimes not delivered in the way the school intends. Consequently, pupils do not always build on their prior knowledge as well as they could in these subjects. The school should ensure that the sequence of learning is clear in all subjects so that pupils consistently learn the curriculum well.
- A few pupils have fallen behind in their reading and have not received sufficient support to catch up. This means that these pupils do not read with the confidence and accuracy expected for their age. The school should accelerate the progress in reading for these pupils so that they read with the confidence and accuracy expected for their age.

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 January 2019.

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	103976
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10336857
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	476
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lee Maskell
Headteacher	Elizabeth Hart
Website	www.brandhall.sandwell.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for its pupils.
- The school no longer offers provision for two-year-olds.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of sessions, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and reviewed reading resources.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents on the school's website.
- 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 observed pupils in lessons and at other times during the day.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, curriculum leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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