

Inspection of Saltdean Primary School

Chiltington Way, Saltdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 8HB

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this welcoming school, where there is a palpable shared sense of belonging. The school has created an atmosphere where pupils and adults feel valued and nurtured. Staff know their pupils and families extremely well and there is a real sense of community.

The school has high aspirations for all pupils. The curriculum is wide and interesting, enriched with visits and experiences. The school is working quickly to eradicate some underachievement in a small number of subjects. Pupils are keen to learn and achieve well in most subject areas, reflecting the school's mission to 'nurture students to become life-long learners'.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and around school. They rise to meet the high expectations that the school sets for them. They focus on their learning and have good attitudes to school life. This starts with children in the early years, who listen well and show high levels of self-control. Pupils feel safe and they know they have adults who will help them if they need it.

Pupils benefit from a rich range of personal development opportunities. These include taking on meaningful leadership roles, such as 'house captains and eco-warriors', and having access to a range of clubs, such as weaving, reading and a variety of sports.

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

The school has put together an inspiring curriculum that enthuses pupils to want to learn more. It is carefully planned from the early years through to Year 6. At each stage, the curriculum sets out the essential knowledge and key vocabulary pupils should learn. This knowledge has been carefully sequenced so that learning builds on what pupils already know. As a result, staff have clear guidance to follow so they know what to teach and when.

Teachers are skilled at presenting information and asking questions that help pupils deepen their understanding. They make good use of resources to help pupils to understand new concepts. In subjects such as science and history, teachers model and encourage the use of ambitious subject-specific vocabulary effectively. However, in small number of subjects, assessment is not used precisely and, therefore, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and addressed.

In mathematics and writing, the curriculum is not taught as well as it could be. In mathematics, for example, pupils do not get enough practise to develop fluency and transfer important mathematical knowledge into their long-term memory. In writing, the school recognises that its curriculum did not previously offer pupils enough opportunities to develop the skills to write well. As a result, some pupils cannot write as well as they should for their age. Recent work to address these issues is already showing positive signs of improvement. For example, in writing, pupils now have

more opportunities to write at length across a range of genres and, therefore, their skills are developing appropriately.

Pupils benefit from a well-designed, expertly taught phonics curriculum. They are supported well with books that are matched carefully to their phonics knowledge. Pupils quickly learn the letters and sounds that they need to become accurate and fluent readers. A love of reading is evident across the school and pupils read widely and often.

Pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly by staff. The knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator supports staff well in making adaptations that enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. Pupils with SEND mostly achieve well and staff closely monitor how well they are doing.

Behaviour is very good. Children in the early years settle well at school. All pupils have a clear understanding of the school's expectations. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. In lessons across the school, pupils focus on their learning. Staff celebrate pupils' successes. From early years, routines are well established. The school works hard to encourage high attendance.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is a distinctive strength. Some aspects, such as attention to pupils' character development, are impressive. Pupils take on leadership roles in school. They help with decision-making and show thoughtful consideration towards others. Extra activities such as clubs, outdoor learning and trips are planned with deliberate thought about the purpose and benefits to all. These, and many other activities, prompt pupils to try new things, take on responsibility and build self-esteem.

Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its place in the local community. Staff are valued and appreciate the way that leaders are mindful of their workload. However, there is currently some variation in how well middle leaders check how effectively the curriculum is being delivered across the full range of subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Checks on the impact of recent improvements to the curriculum are not consistently effective. As a result, leaders are not clear enough about where recent changes are working and where further work is needed. The school should ensure that monitoring routines enable prompt action to be taken where further

improvements to the curriculum are needed, so that pupils achieve consistently well.

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not taught as consistently well as leaders intend. This means that some pupils do not always learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff develop the expertise needed to help pupils learn and remember important knowledge and skills over time.

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	114479
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10321795
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	571
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Colleen Weafer
Headteacher	John Maxwell
Website	www.saltdeanprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, no pupils attended any sort of alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met and spoke with leaders, staff, pupils, parents, governors and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, art and history. They discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspectors met with leaders to discuss curriculum thinking in writing and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered 177 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors met with the school special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.

Inspection team

James Stuart, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gillian Lovatt-Young

Ofsted Inspector

Heather Fearn

Ofsted Inspector

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