Inspection of a good school: Valence Primary School

Bonham Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 3AR

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 June 2024

Outcome

Valence Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school encourages pupils to be respectful of others and of the differences between people. Through the curriculum, the school motivates pupils to be independent and to work hard. Leaders have high academic expectations of all pupils.

In class, pupils do not disrupt the learning of others and listen keenly to teachers. All pupils enjoy 'going for gold' as part of the school's behaviour rewards system. Pupils are safe.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take up positions of responsibility. For example, pupils have proposed and helped to organise over forty pupil-led clubs, that include movie-watching, dance and herb growing. Pupil eco-warriors promote healthy living, lead assemblies and recently grew vegetables and sold them at a local market.

Clubs such as multi-sports, ballet, football and mindfulness are popular. The school makes sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully involved in all the personal-development activities that the school has to offer.

Leaders organise regular outings to deepen pupils' knowledge of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 attended a sporting residential to build their resilience, and in Year 2 pupils visited a local city farm to expand their knowledge of animals and science.

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

The school has designed an ambitious and broad curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. This curriculum includes a new programme for teaching early reading with increased rigour. Pupils who need help to keep up with their peers receive regular, consistent, high-quality support to help them with their reading. In the early years, the curriculum provides children with the skills, including communication and language, that they need in preparation for Year 1.

Teachers have effective subject knowledge. In a few subjects where specialist knowledge is needed, including physical education, the school makes use of subject specialists to deliver lessons alongside classroom teachers. Teaching breaks learning into small steps that help pupils to learn and remember key content so that pupils are well prepared to succeed academically. For example in music in Year 2, lyrics, syllables and rhythms of a new song were taught to pupils step by step before pupils learned the song's melody. In the Nursery across both sites, adults encourage children to use their imagination, expand their vocabulary and to take turns when using resources with others.

Typically, teaching checks that pupils understand what they have been taught. However, occasionally teaching does not check as routinely that all pupils understand and remember what they have been taught. When this occurs, memorising and building key subject content over time is hindered.

The schools' leaders are highly reflective and accurately aware of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The governing body takes an active role in supporting the school. During governance 'open days' governors visit the school, and speak to pupils and staff to understand and evaluate the school's work to drive continual improvement. The school regularly checks that teachers' workload is manageable and ensures that the wellbeing of staff is maintained.

The impact of all these strengths is evident in some of the school's published academic outcomes. For example, outcomes in the phonics check in Year 1 have increased significantly in recent time. Results in the multiplication tables check and in mathematics assessments at the end of Year 6 are significantly above national. Pupils' written work across subjects and outcomes in writing national assessments are not as high.

The support provided for pupils with SEND is routinely strong. In mainstream classes, all staff working with pupils with SEND have detailed knowledge of their specific needs. They use this knowledge to adapt resources effectively and ensure that pupils with SEND are supported effectively. In the additionally resourced provision, pupils with SEND are particularly well assisted. Staff provide clear structures for pupils and communicate skilfully. Pupils in the provision are happy, calm and focused on their learning. The Nursery assessment resourced provision is equally well led and managed. Staff here guide children to explore new knowledge, develop new skills and teach the children to communicate clearly.

Pupils' attendance rates are significantly above the national average. This is because the school has strong professional relationships with families and very high expectations. In addition, the school identifies rapidly any pupils who may require support to attend school, and where necessary quickly provides families with all the support that they need.

Pupils behave very well in class. They want to do well and take pride in their work. They listen carefully and respond positively to staff and to their peers. Staff sort out any problems that occur, swiftly and thoroughly. In the early years, children are focused on their learning, both in class and when they deepen their learning through play.

The school council contributes to the school's decision-making. For example, they created a 'quiet zone' in the playground for pupils to relax and play board games. The school council also organised a 'dress to express' day to raise money for charity. Pupils compete in sports competitions frequently in the borough, including netball, golf and tennis.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff know the pupils well and recognise the signs to look out for to identify a pupil that may be at risk of harm. The school provides pupils identified as being at risk with a range of support, from within the school and through work with external agencies. However, the processes to ensure that pupils who leave the school mid-year are safe before they are taken off the school's roll are not as rigorous as they should be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for developing pupils' writing does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to master its key building blocks. As a result, the quality of pupils' written work across subjects is not as high as it should be. This is reflected in the published academic outcomes for writing in key stages 1 and 2. The school should ensure that the writing curriculum supports pupils systematically to develop their transcription, fluency and compositional writing skills across all subjects.

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 November 2014.

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	101222
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10323273
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	967
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Avril McIntyre
Headteacher	Richard November
Website	www.valenceprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January, 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2006

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is situated across two sites about one mile apart. Approximately half the pupils from the Nursery to Year 6 attend the site on Bonham Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 3AR. The other half of pupils from Nursery to Year 6 attend the site on St George's Road, Dagenham, Essex RM9 5JB. Both school sites are overseen by the same headteacher.
- On the Bonham Road site, the school runs a Nursery assessment resourced provision (NARP) for up to 16 children with SEND with a range of needs. The provision is part time.
- On the St George's Road site, school runs an additionally resources provision (ARP) for up to 19 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour, attendance, early reading and pupils' wider development.
- The inspectors met with representatives from the governing body and had a discussion with the school improvement partner.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the respective responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Guy Forbat, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Smith	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Rawlings	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: http://eepurl.com/iTrDn.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024