

Inspection of Bealings School

Sandy Lane, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 6LW

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempt by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflects changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The curriculum takes pupils beyond the boundaries of this small rural school. Pupils enjoy the interesting questions posed by staff. The questions support pupils to link their learning together across different subjects. Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy the stories that carefully thread through school life. As a result, pupils have an excellent understanding of the world around them.

The school is a friendly family. Pupils chair 'gatherings' and listen carefully to the opinions of others. Debate is encouraged and everyone is included. Pupils look at ways to improve the school or share who they want to thank, including staff. Older 'guardians' are proud of their roles and the responsibility this entails. They look after and play with the youngest children, for instance, or cook food for the school community. This is a place pupils can be themselves and fit in.

The small size of the school is not a barrier to wider experiences. Positive links with other small schools mean pupils take part in a wide variety of sports and activities. Clubs and trips further enrich the curriculum. Music and art permeate school life. Pupils talk fondly of these experiences and what they have learned.

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

There has been recent turbulence in the school's leadership. Important improvements to the curriculum are underway with key areas being changed and refined. Working closely alongside the local authority, the school has managed these changes sensitively and effectively.

The school's design of its unique curriculum makes use of meaningful 'learning enquiries'. This enables pupils to link knowledge from different topics together. In some cases, the questions take pupils' learning beyond the topics covered in the national curriculum. Most of the curriculum builds pupils' 'awe' and knowledge step-by-step. Effective checks on learning show teachers what pupils already know. Teachers know how best to help pupils learn. They put in place engaging activities that support pupils to learn effectively. Children in the early years get off to a good start in their learning. Adults support them well to build number and reading knowledge. Pupils make good progress through the curriculum and achieve well in most national tests.

The school recognised that some curriculum areas were not working as well as they could be. New curriculum documentation, outlining key knowledge, is now in place. While staff training aligns with the new changes, some staff are still getting to grips with the improved methods of teaching. Some learning activities that staff give to pupils are not as effective as they could be. Therefore, sometimes, pupils do not make as much progress as they do elsewhere.

Books and stories play an important part in the school curriculum. They connect well to the varied topics pupils' study. Staff regularly read to pupils and children in the

early years, so they build and develop their vocabulary. The improved approach to teaching phonics is helping pupils to develop their reading knowledge. If pupils find reading tricky, staff provide effective support that helps them to catch up.

Effective checks on learning enable staff to know pupils' needs well. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same engaging curriculum as everyone else. A small number of pupils get suitable bespoke support adapted to their more complex needs. Pupils with SEND progress well from their varied starting points.

The school provides a sense of belonging that ensures most pupils behave well. Staff rarely have to intervene to support pupils' behaviour. Lessons move smoothly from periods of high activity to quiet times of reflection. On the playground, pupils play well in mixed-aged groups. Effective discussion and resolution deal with any rare falling out. This is a place where pupils reflect the school's motto of 'Be!'

The school's approach to personal development is exemplary. From the offset in the early years, staff give children the tools to become confident, inquisitive learners. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum tightly link to the 'big questions' that thread through the curriculum. The stories pupils hear teach them exceptionally well about topics such as diversity and difference. This knowledge empowers pupils. It gives them positive moral values and high regard for each other. A strong sense of community develops through activities such as gardening, sports and raising money for charity.

Despite recent changes to the curriculum, staff feel that the school considers their workload and well-being. Staff development is purposeful. It has led to positive change quickly. Changes to governance has also been rapid. While governors' challenge to the school is improving, this work is still in its infancy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff have not got to grips with the improved methods to deliver the curriculum. Staff are refining their pedagogical knowledge. Sometimes, they do not use effective learning activities, which means that pupils find it harder to build on their knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers are supported to implement the curriculum consistently well in all subjects.
- The improved curriculum monitoring by governors is still developing. Until recently, governors did not have a secure grip on how well the curriculum was working. Governors' curriculum knowledge is growing. Governors should ensure

that their monitoring supports and challenges leaders to accurately evaluate what is working well and what needs to improve.

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 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	124595
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10323683
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	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Heygate
Headteacher	Rebecca Leek
Website	www.bealings.net
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 July 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An interim headteacher has been in the role since September 2023. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2024.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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.

- 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 lead inspector considered both the art and PSHE curriculums through a range of documentation and pupil work.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with those responsible for governance, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils on both days of inspection. Inspectors spent time with pupils at lunchtimes and breaktimes to observe behaviour and talk to pupils about their experiences of the school.
- The lead inspector considered the 56 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff over both days on inspection. The lead inspector considered the responses from Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kay Leach

Ofsted Inspector

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