

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: South Benfleet Primary School

High Road, South Benfleet, Benfleet, Essex SS7 5HA

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 January 2025

Outcome

South Benfleet Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Dominic Carver. This school is a single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daren Legg.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this warm and welcoming school. They are eager to learn about the world they live in. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities that the school provides for them to represent their school in the community. Pupils wear their school badge with pride when conducting fieldwork in the local area or when performing as members of the choir at The Cliffs Pavilion.

Children in the Reception Year quickly settle into school life. They develop the confidence and independence they need to be effective learners. Staff establish clear and consistently high expectations from a young age. This helps to motivate pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons. They achieve well.

A range of trips and visitors help to bring the curriculum to life. Visiting magistrates support pupils to learn how to be responsible. The residential trip to the Netherlands is the highlight of many pupils' years at primary school. Ticking achievements off from the '50 Things' motivates pupils to learn new skills. Whether sewing a button, learning to play a musical instrument, or cooking a meal for someone else, pupils strive to achieve as many as they can before they leave for secondary school.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that sets out the important knowledge pupils need to understand. The school provides effective training for staff to help develop their subject knowledge. Staff have a secure understanding of the subjects they teach. This helps staff

to present information clearly to pupils. This includes in the early years, where staff probe, discuss and converse with children to help them understand and use language in their learning and play.

In most subjects, teachers provide pupils with well-considered opportunities to make useful links between new learning and existing knowledge. This helps pupils to connect their learning together. For example, in computing, pupils revisit and build on their understanding of algorithms each year. Consequently, pupils understand what algorithms are and how to use them in a range of ways. In some other subjects, it is less clear how teaching consistently links existing and new knowledge together. While pupils learn well in these subjects, they do not routinely make the connections that they should. As a result, pupils do not secure as deep an understanding in these subjects as they do in others.

The school has threaded well-chosen books and stories through the curriculum. Staff identify pupils who are still at the early stages of reading with precision. Well-trained staff help these pupils to become confident and fluent readers. As a result, pupils read well across the school. Children learn to love reading as soon as they begin in the Reception Year. Pupils of all ages enjoy choosing a new book from the 'recommended reading list'. They also value sitting to listen to the stories that their teachers read to them in class or during assemblies.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. This is because staff are knowledgeable in how to identify their specific needs. Staff then meet these individual needs by putting in place precise and effective bespoke support. They also carefully balance supporting pupils with SEND and promoting their independence. For example, focused English interventions help targeted pupils to improve their writing. This helps pupils with SEND to secure the knowledge that they need for future learning.

Staff establish clear routines and expectations for behaviour from the moment that children start in the Reception Year. Children consistently rise to these. Pupils across the school behave very well. The school has equally high expectations for attendance. The school works with families to remove potential barriers to pupils attending school. As a result, most pupils attend school regularly.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum teaches pupils important knowledge to be well prepared for their futures. Pupils have a secure understanding of what makes a healthy relationship. Pupils understand the importance of respecting those who are different to them. They appreciate listening to the diverse opinions and beliefs that they each share. This informs the positive ethos that exists here.

Trustees ensure that they check carefully on the work of the school. There is knowledge and expertise within the trust board that supports and challenges leaders effectively. Where needed, trustees use external expertise to help them to do this. Leaders across the school are reflective and accurate about where to target future school development priorities. They balance sustained improvement with looking after staff well-being. Staff are proud to be a part of the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects in the wider curriculum, pupils do not have the consistent opportunities that they need to make connections between what they already know and their new learning. This means that pupils do not build as deep an understanding in these subjects as they do in others. The school should ensure that teaching in all subjects provides pupils with the precise opportunities they need to better link prior learning to new learning. This is so that pupils secure a deeper understanding of the planned curriculum and achieve equally well across all subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in November 2015.

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	137029
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345314
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daren Legg
Headteacher	Dominic Carver
Website	www.southbenfleet.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, staff and trustees.

- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of trustee meetings, records of trustee monitoring, school development plans and school policies.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View alongside written correspondence received during the inspection. He also took into consideration the Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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