Inspection of a good school: Bolnore Village Primary School

Updown Hill, Bolnore Village, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4GD

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Outcome

Bolnore Village Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bolnore School is a hive of activity. Pupils work hard and have fun in this bright, attractive school. They are proud of their work, which is displayed with care throughout the school. Pupils of all ages told us that they enjoy school. They told us that adults trust them to do their best, and most do so.

The school's curriculum gives pupils rich experiences of learning. Trips, visitors and activities help to bring learning to life. For example, a recent trip to a castle helped pupils in Year 1 to learn about 1066 and life in Norman castles. Some of the older pupils spoke enthusiastically about some of the things they have learned in previous years, such as their study of The Great Fire of London and Shackleton's expedition to the Antarctic.

Pupils usually behave well. They play together sensibly during playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are polite and enjoy chatting to their friends while eating lunch. The older pupils take good care of the youngest pupils in the playground.

Pupils feel safe in school. They told us that they have no concerns about bullying and that their teachers sort out any problems quickly.

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

The school continues to offer pupils a good, and improving, quality of education. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They want every pupil to leave the school with the personal and academic skills needed to be confident, happy and successful learners.

Leaders have made some improvements to the school's curriculum since the last inspection. They have looked closely at what pupils need to learn in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have updated curriculum plans in these subjects so that teachers are clear about what to teach, and when. This means that pupils are doing better in English and mathematics than before, particularly in writing.

Leaders know that some pupils, including some of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not learn as well in some subjects as they do in English and mathematics. This is because the school's plans do not give teachers clear information about how to teach subjects such as history and geography. Leaders have begun to make changes to put this right. For instance, they have checked that the school's history curriculum includes all the knowledge and skills they want pupils to know. The next step is to plan exactly what to teach in each subject and year group.

Leaders have improved the school's writing curriculum during the past year. This means that pupils are getting on much better in their writing than before. They told us that their teachers are encouraging and expect more of them than in the past. Pupils told us that they like having things in the classroom to help them with their writing, such as dictionaries, whiteboards and vocabulary reminders on the classroom 'working walls'.

The school's well-planned programme for teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) gets pupils off to a good start in reading. Children start to learn phonics from the very start of Reception Year and love phonics sessions. They quickly learn how to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them to read and write. Leaders continuously review the early years curriculum. For example, this year, children are being introduced to tricky words earlier in the year so that they become familiar with them more quickly.

Many pupils love reading and become confident readers. They take a book home to read as soon as they start school. Most pupils read at home and visit the local library with their families. This helps them to practise what they have learned in school. Pupils enthuse about their favourite authors and enjoy talking about the kinds of books that they like to read.

Pupils' good behaviour means that they and their teachers can get on with their work. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs. They respect adults and each other. They have lots of opportunities to try out sports and arts activities through clubs and events. Everyone joins in regularly with forest school. Pupils collect wood for the campfire, learn how to use tools safely and complete crafts using natural materials. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils can join in with clubs and events just as well as other pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that there are clear arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Staff and pupils told us that they know exactly what to do if they need help or have any concerns. For example, during the inspection, pupils knew where to go and whom to speak to when a friend fell over during the lunchtime break. One parent said, 'Everyone cares for each other here.'

Adults look after children in early years really well. This means that children settle into school life quickly. They feel comfortable talking to an adult if they need reassurance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's work to update plans for teaching the foundation subjects is at an early stage of development. This means that teaching does not build on pupils' prior learning strongly enough in subjects other than English and mathematics. Leaders know that this is an aspect of the school's work that needs some attention. They have already made a start. Leaders have begun work with staff to review and develop curriculum plans in history and are making good use of subject expertise among the staff team to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge. However, leaders recognise that there is still much to do. They should press on with their work to develop the school's wider curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all subject plans are clear so that teachers know exactly what they need to teach, and when.
- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan next year's curriculum and train staff in how to deliver it that they are in the process of bringing this about.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Bolnore Village Primary School to be good.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	135607
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10111292
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vacancy
Headteacher	Tracy Taylor
Website	www.bolnorevillage.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2016

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019. She had been in post for two weeks at the time of the inspection.
- There is a vacancy for the chair of the governing body. The two vice-chairs are currently sharing the role until a new chair is appointed.

Information about this inspection

- I met with a number of senior leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader and the special educational needs coordinator. I also met with six governors, including one of the vice-chairs, and with a local authority representative.
- I looked in detail at reading, writing and history. I completed a range of inspection activities in order to explore these subjects in depth, including meetings with subject leaders, lesson visits with senior leaders, a review of a sample of pupils' work and discussions with pupils about their learning.
- I considered the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. I checked a range of school documents and records, including the safeguarding policy and the single central

record. I also discussed safeguarding procedures with senior leaders, governors and with other members of staff.

- I spoke with pupils and parents during the inspection. I also considered the views expressed in 101 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), and in 131 responses to the pupil survey and 33 responses to the staff survey.
- I observed arrangements to keep pupils safe during the school day, including during breaktimes.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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