

Inspection of Westdene Primary School

Bankside, Westdene, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 5GN

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Westdene Primary School is a joyous school. There is a 'just right' atmosphere where every member of the school community is encouraged to be themselves. Individuality and uniqueness are recognised and celebrated.

Relationships between adults and pupils, and among pupils, are kind, supportive and respectful. Throughout the school pupils are polite, friendly and relaxed. Every pupil selects a set of trusted adults, known as 'Helping hands', so there is always someone to go to should help be needed. Pupils say that they feel supported, safe and happy.

Positive relationships, good listening and opportunities to reflect sit at the heart of the school's approach to behaviour. Behaviour 'mistakes' are identified and responded to as learning opportunities. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at less structured times is highly positive. Pupils understand the value of teamwork, and this is reflected in the way that they support each other when learning or playing.

Expectations for pupils' learning and achievement are exceedingly ambitious. The curriculum is a powerfully designed tool, enabling pupils to successfully acquire vital knowledge while developing their understanding of diverse ethical issues. The vast extra-curricular offer enables pupils to pursue wider interests, such as early morning Rhythm Masters during which pupils learn to rap.

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

Across the school, pupils settle quickly into their classes and begin learning straight away. In Nursery and Reception, the environment is used skilfully to entice children to explore, learn and consolidate knowledge in meaningful ways. For example, in mathematics children used the familiar tale of The Three Bears to explore the number three. Older pupils demonstrated strong computational skills that support them well in selecting efficient strategies for solving a range of mathematical problems.

Learning to read, to comprehend and to enjoy different texts is given high priority. The youngest children are quickly introduced to letter sounds. They learn to sound, say and write simple words and quickly see themselves as readers and writers. The school's systematic approach to teaching reading is embedded and pupils have books matched accurately to the sounds that they know. Routine opportunities exist for pupils to practise their reading. Staff are trained well, and pupils learn to read with confidence and fluency. Any pupil who struggles to learn to read, is given extensive and bespoke additional support that enables them to catch up. Pupils further benefit from listening to their teachers reading aloud. Events such as book week, with visiting authors and poets, bring learning to life and enhance pupils' wide engagement with literature.

Pupils are inspired by the curriculum. Effectively taught sequences of lessons enable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn and progress well. This is demonstrated through high-quality written work in English, and across the subjects, as well as by pupils' strong performance in national tests.

Pupils attend school regularly. Oversight of attendance is meticulous. Whenever necessary, additional support is provided to families to ensure that positive attendance continues. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own learning. They use a known route (brain, book, board, buddy, boss) to solve queries with maximum independence. The strong personal, social and health education curriculum supports pupils to develop resilience and powerful learning behaviours. For example, pupils learn to recognise and manage emotions, as well as learning about safety, including online.

A myriad of well-chosen activities exist to promote pupils' personal development and to promote pupils' understanding of difference and equality. A raft of leadership roles enables pupils to experience responsibility and to make a positive contribution to school life. There is a very strong take-up across the extensive range of activities on offer. Attendance at enrichment activities is tracked to ensure that disadvantaged pupils' experiences are purposefully enhanced. Barriers to participation in the school's personal development offer are actively identified and removed.

Leaders, including the governing body, are successfully meeting their mission of 'embedding excellence and equality'. There is a profoundly inclusive culture and a relentless drive for continuous school improvement. For example, additional capacity has been added to the SEND team to ensure that pupils' identified needs are met well. Curriculum content and resources have been reviewed to ensure that all pupils can see themselves, their families and their heritages reflected in the school's curriculum.

Staff are unanimously proud to work at the school. They benefit from a robust professional development offer, which helps them to continue strengthening their skills. Staff feel supported by leaders, with their workload considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	114380
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10296177
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	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charles Haywood
Headteacher	Jenny Stratton and Lisa Hagon (acting co-headteachers)
Website	www.westdene.brighton-hove.dbprimary.com/
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the substantive headteacher has retired. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher are currently leading the school in an acting co-headteacher capacity. A new headteacher has recently been appointed. He will take up his role in January 2025.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken it into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the acting co-headteachers and senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and held a remote meeting with the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, the SEND action plan and a range of curriculum and provision policies. Inspectors also considered attendance and behaviour information.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with staff and with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- In addition, inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work from key stages 1 and 2 across foundation subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1 and 3 read aloud to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the 87 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and 80 responses to the online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Oliver Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Perkins	Ofsted Inspector

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