

Inspection of a good school: The Belham Primary School

165 Bellenden Road, London, SE15 4DG

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 June 2024

Outcome

The Belham Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Alison Sprakes. This school is part of The Charter Schools Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cassie Buchanan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jonathan Slater.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy and welcoming school. Staff greet pupils with a warm smile and take time to find out how they are. This creates a positive start to the day. Respectful relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils explain that if they have a worry or feel sad, they can speak to a trusted adult who will help them. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils behave incredibly well. This is because the school has high expectations of behaviour. Pupils display the school values of being 'helpful' and 'trustworthy' in daily school life. For example, Year 6 pupils take pride in supporting younger pupils in the dining hall.

Pupils are eager to talk about their learning and take pride in their work. They work hard and this means they achieve well across the curriculum.

Leaders listen to pupils' suggestions and opinions about important issues. For example, pupils in Year 5 wrote to the Mayor of London about actions that could be taken to improve air quality and sustainability. These experiences help pupils to develop their own ideas.

The school provides a wide range of clubs such as tennis, football and debate club. These activities help pupils to foster their talents and pursue their interests.

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

Reading is prioritised here. Children are taught to read as soon as they join Reception. This is because the school wants every pupil to read confidently and without delay. Pupils read widely and often. They discuss their reading choices with enthusiasm and explain how reading takes them to 'another world'.

Staff are well trained in the teaching of phonics. This means there is a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading. Staff check the sounds that pupils know regularly. Books are matched to the sounds and letters pupils know. This helps pupils read with developing fluency. Staff typically identify and support pupils who may need extra help to keep up with their peers.

Leaders have established a curriculum that is well sequenced. They have identified the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn and have broken this down into logical steps from Reception to Year 6. For example, children in Reception predict and compare the mass of different objects because they have been taught the language of 'heavier' and 'lighter'. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 confidently explain how to weave using vocabulary such as 'loom', 'fabric' and 'over weaving' and take pride in evaluating their artwork.

Leaders make sure that staff have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum. Staff explain concepts such as 'colonisation' and 'repatriation' clearly. In mathematics, teachers encourage pupils to identify possible misconceptions when estimating and this helps pupils to address errors before they arise. However, sometimes teaching staff do not check sharply enough what pupils know and remember, and this means some pupils develop gaps in their learning. In 2023, the published outcomes for achievement in mathematics at the end of Year 6 were disappointing. The school is taking appropriate steps to ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics improves.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and early on in their school careers. Teaching staff adapt their teaching and resources appropriately so that pupils with SEND achieve well alongside their peers. For example, some pupils visit a local café as part of the 'life skills' curriculum. Pupils use visual supports to help them order from the menu.

Pupils' conduct is excellent across the school. This means the curriculum is taught without interruption. The school has a structured programme for pupils' personal development through which pupils are taught the importance of greeting others and congratulating those who do well. Attendance is high because the school stresses the importance of being in school every day. Leaders work effectively with families and pupils who need additional support to attend regularly.

The wider curriculum is very well designed. The school aims for pupils to be 'tolerant, respectful little Londoners'. Pupils are taught about consent and the risks that they might face within and beyond the school. For example, children in Reception are taught about 'stranger danger' and are taught the language they can use if they do not like something.

Pupils learn that families can look different. Pupils respectfully explain that what is important about a family is that children are 'loved and cared for'.

The trust and the local governing body are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. Trustees and governors have the knowledge and skills required to fulfil their roles and to monitor the effectiveness of the school. Staff are positive about the guidance they receive to develop their practice and the initiatives in place to support their well-being and manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, checks on what pupils know and remember are not as effective as they could be. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their learning. The school should ensure that teachers carefully check previously taught content so that pupils apply previously learnt knowledge, vocabulary and skills to their current learning.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2018.

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	142090
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10323410
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan Slater
CEO	Cassie Buchanan
Headteacher	Alison Sprakes
Website	www.thebelhamprimaryschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Belham Primary School is part of The Charter Schools Educational Trust which consists of eight schools.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss school development.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer, representatives of the board of trustees, the local governing body and with the school improvement partner for the school.
- 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 scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to pupils' wider development and behaviour and attendance. The inspector also met with groups of staff and pupils to discuss these aspects of the school's work.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The views of parents and staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Deborah Walters, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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