

Inspection of a good school: Severne Junior Infant and Nursery School

Severne Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B27 7HR

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 September 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and caring school. Pupils are kind to each other. They learn the importance of treating others fairly and with respect. As one pupil said, 'It is okay to be different because it means that you are special in your own way.' Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils rise to these. They listen carefully in lessons and work hard. At social times, pupils play and chat happily.

Parents appreciate the work of staff to create a supportive and nurturing environment for their children. Pupils trust adults to help with any worries they have. They feel safe in school. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. This is because adults are quick to sort out any problems before they escalate.

Before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, leaders provided a range of clubs and visits to broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils are excited that some of these activities have started again, for example dance and Lego club.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They like learning new things. In some subjects, pupils learn the knowledge they need to achieve well. However, this is not the case in all subjects or in the early years.

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

Leaders ensure that all pupils study a broad curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In some subjects, curriculum plans clearly set out, in order, the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn. This is especially so in mathematics, science and design and technology. In these subjects, pupils' knowledge builds step by step. Pupils remember what they have learned and talk about it confidently. However, this is not consistent across the curriculum.

In the early years, leaders' expectations of what children will achieve are too low. Leaders focus on planning the activities children will do. They have not considered the small chunks of knowledge they want children to learn and when. As a result, children do not learn all that they need to be ready for Year 1. In key stages 1 and 2, leaders have not considered the important knowledge that pupils will learn in some subjects. Sometimes, teachers cover lots of content in a superficial way. For example, in history, Year 5 pupils learn about the 'Lindisfarne Gospels', 'Beowulf' and 'Bede's History' in one lesson. Some curriculum plans do not break knowledge down into small steps. Sometimes, what pupils learn does not build in a logical sequence. This means that pupils do not develop a secure understanding of important concepts.

Leaders promote a love of reading. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to their teachers read. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn phonics every day. Teachers know the sounds pupils need to learn and in which order. They keep a close eye on how pupils are doing. As a result, teachers know which pupils are falling behind. These pupils receive extra support to help them catch up. This support continues for the weakest readers in key stage 2. In contrast, leaders are not prioritising phonics teaching in Reception. It has not yet started, which means these children are already falling behind.

Staff know pupils well. They are quick to identify if they have any additional needs. Vulnerable pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral support. Staff personalise this for individuals. The 'Rainbow room' provides a safe space for pupils who need help to manage their emotions. Pupils with SEND and those learning English as an additional language receive the right support to help them make progress. This includes help from adults and access to practical resources.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. The school is a harmonious community. This is because pupils learn to respect the views and beliefs of others. Leaders prioritise pupils' physical and mental health. For example, this term all pupils are taking part in additional physical education lessons, led by a sports coach. Opportunities such as steel pan lessons and chess club help pupils to develop their talents and broaden their interests.

Leaders and governors are mindful of staff workload. They take steps to keep this manageable. However, governors do not keep a close eye on the curriculum pupils are receiving. As a result, they are not able to offer leaders the challenge and support needed to address weaknesses in provision.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that the further development of the curriculum, including in the early years, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive training on how to keep pupils safe. They are aware of the signs that might indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff know the process to follow if they have a concern

about a pupil. Leaders take appropriate action in response to the concerns they receive. However, sometimes leaders do not record what these actions are. Recording systems make it difficult for leaders and governors to build a picture of what is happening for pupils and families.

Pupils feel safe and well-cared-for. They say there is an adult they can go to if they are worried or upset. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, for example when they are online or out in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early years curriculum is not suitably ambitious. Leaders have not identified what they want children to learn and when. As a result, the curriculum does not prepare children well enough for learning in Year 1. Leaders need to raise their expectations of what children will know and be able to do by the end of the Reception year. They need to plan and implement a curriculum that builds step by step towards the end points they want children to achieve.
- In key stages 1 and 2, leaders are suitably ambitious for pupils. However, in some subjects, leaders have not planned and organised a curriculum that enables pupils to achieve the outcomes they have set out. In subjects such as history, geography and art, plans do not break the knowledge that pupils will learn into manageable chunks. Leaders have not planned for how they will help pupils to remember important content long term. Leaders should identify what they want pupils to learn and when in all subjects. They should ensure that this knowledge builds logically towards the end points identified in curriculum plans.
- Leaders have not identified what the specific weaknesses in the curriculum are. As a result, they have not started to take action to address these. Some subject leaders lack subject expertise. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders have the knowledge needed to plan and implement a carefully considered and well-sequenced curriculum. Leaders at all levels should sharpen their evaluation of the curriculum so that they can make the necessary improvements.
- Governors have a limited understanding of the school's curriculum. They rely too much on what leaders tell them. Consequently, governors are not able to support and challenge leaders' actions effectively. Governors need to check on the quality of the curriculum more closely, and on how well pupils are achieving in different subjects.
- Systems for recording safeguarding concerns are overly reliant on one individual. Senior leaders and governors do not have sufficient oversight of what is happening for pupils and families, or of the actions taken to safeguard pupils. Leaders and governors need to ensure that the responsibility for recording safeguarding concerns is shared by all. Actions taken to safeguard pupils should always be recorded.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

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.

If you are the school and 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	103252
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10200033
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	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Jackson
Headteacher	Peter Hopkins
Website	www.severne.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of staff, including subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and three governors. She also spoke with a representative of the Birmingham Education Partnership.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, science and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also

looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about the curriculum in the early years, mathematics, art, geography and music.

- Inspectors listened to some key stage 1 and 2 pupils read to a familiar adult. They talked to pupils about their reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school. Inspectors reviewed the 78 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. They reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and pupils who have left the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and staff about pupils' safety.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 12 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the nine free-text comments. They spoke with parents at the beginning and end of the school day. They also took account of the seven responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Gater

Her Majesty's Inspector

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