

Inspection of St Peter's Community Primary School

St Peter's Road, Portslade-By-Sea, Brighton, East Sussex BN41 1LS

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are safe, happy and welcoming. Adults have high expectations for how pupils should be with one another. They have one golden rule that weaves through everything that they do 'Treat others the way you would like to be treated.' This helps pupils to understand that everyone is different and that this is okay. When pupils have difficulties following this rule, teachers and the adults in school are kind and nurturing. They work with pupils and families to make sure they get back on track and ready to learn.

When pupils returned to school following the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders and teachers rightly initially focused on helping pupils to get settled at school and feeling safe.

Pupils enjoy learning a broad range of subjects. However, the teaching they receive in some subjects is not as well planned as it should be. As a result, pupils do not make connections in their learning and do not remember the most important knowledge.

Pupils know what bullying behaviour is. They told inspectors that bullying happens at this school, but not often. Adults do not tolerate this, they are quick to sort it out, which means it rarely happens again.

Living in the vibrant city of Brighton means pupils get to take part in lots of experiences beyond the school, such as 'The Big Sing' and 'The Children's Parade'. Pupils are looking forward to resuming trips and visits within the local area following the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The headteacher has high expectations and is passionate about pupils developing a 'zest for learning'. Teachers share her high expectations. However, the most important things leaders want pupils to learn in some subjects are not identified clearly enough. Sometimes, too much content is included. This means that teachers do not always focus on the most important things pupils need to learn. Leaders and governors know that they need to improve the quality of the curriculum if they are to meet staff's and leaders' high expectations. Nevertheless, leaders' curriculum choices aim to give pupils experiences beyond the town they live in.

Leaders have not reviewed what pupils know and remember well enough, since returning to school after the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, precise gaps in pupils' understanding are not known. Leaders have not given enough thought to how teaching will help close these gaps. In some subjects, pupils also struggle to make links to the things they have learned before.

In contrast, the curriculum in the early years is coherent and carefully planned. Across the setting, learning activities including reading, are thoughtfully considered to enable children to practise and apply what they have learned. Adults know children well and what they can and cannot do well. When it is time to learn something new, adults carefully break this learning down, so that children understand what to do next. Children in the early years, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are busy, curious and independent learners. Routines are well established. Children are kind to one another, helping out when needed, for example, by helping a friend put on a coat, or getting a pen ready for a classmate.

Leaders know that pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not learn to read quickly enough. Too many pupils cannot link letters and sounds with confidence. Staff training on new resources has taken place. However, leaders have not yet checked how well teachers have understood this training. Some teachers need more guidance on selecting the right books to help pupils learn to read. Teaching is not precise enough to help all pupils catch up. The headteacher aims for pupils to develop 'a love of story'. Leaders are in the process of increasing opportunities for pupils to engage with a wide range of books. Staff changes and the COVID-19 pandemic have slowed leaders' work to strengthen reading.

Pupils learn to have active lifestyles and how to keep healthy. They are looking forward to clubs, especially those that are sporty, to start up again following the COVID-19 pandemic. Older pupils get on well. They learn about being a good friend and how to respect and tolerate others. Behaviour in class rarely disturbs learning. Some pupils with SEND receive additional support for their behaviour through the school's nurture group.

Pupils enjoy learning in mathematics. They told inspectors 'Teachers make it easy for us to understand. They break learning down and give us time to learn new things.' Leaders have carefully selected resources to support the teaching of mathematics. Leaders have been mindful of teachers' workload in selecting these resources. Staff recognise and appreciate this.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the governing body supported leaders in the running of the school. This means they lost sight of their statutory responsibilities and oversight of the school, they have plans in place to strengthen their role.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a team approach to safeguarding at this school. Adults know the needs of their community well. Concerns raised about pupils are followed up by leaders to make sure that pupils get the support they need. This is sometimes slow due to waiting lists at other agencies.

Staff have been trained to spot the signs of abuse. However, their knowledge of some procedures is not clear enough. The recruitment process for new staff is thorough, all checks that are needed are made.

Pupils say that they are well looked after in school. Pupils have trusted adults, who support them effectively when things go wrong. Pupils are aware of risks online as well as keeping safe within the locality, including on roads and when riding a bicycle.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Phonics is not taught consistently well in key stage 1. The new phonics scheme is at an early stage of implementation. Sometimes, books are not matched well to pupils' reading abilities. As a result, too many pupils cannot decode or read fluently. Leaders need to ensure that the new phonics scheme is implemented successfully, including the match of books to the sounds pupils are learning, so that pupils make rapid progress.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the most important knowledge they want pupils to learn. Not enough account has been taken of gaps in pupils' knowledge, following the disruption to education arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, teachers do not always focus on the most important things pupils need to learn and pupils are not building their knowledge securely. Leaders need to implement their plans to strengthen the curriculum and identify clearly and precisely what they would like pupils to learn, the order in which pupils will learn new content and take account of gaps in pupils' learning.
- Some staff are not as confident as they need to be about some specific aspects of safeguarding. This risks safeguarding processes not being as water-tight as they could be. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are knowledgeable, clear and confident in understanding specific safeguarding issues and in following the school's procedures.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the governing body has been focused on operational matters. This means they have not focused sufficiently on some of their statutory and strategic responsibilities. Governors need to ensure that they strengthen their strategic work and ensure that they give greater focus to their statutory duties.

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

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| Unique reference number | 114411 |
| Local authority | Brighton and Hove |
| Inspection number | 10210985 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 176 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Mike Nicholls |
| Headteacher | Michele Lawrie |
| Website | www.stpeters.brighton-hove.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 and 20 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- There have been significant staff changes this academic year.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- This school has a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school has nursery provision for three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, members of staff and two representatives from the governing body. An inspector also met with two representatives from the local authority.

- Inspectors spoke with parents at the school gate and considered the 21 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and parents’ written responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 pupils’ books, curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s own evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school’s work to keep pupils safe. They considered a range of safeguarding documentation

Inspection team

Clare Haines, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Katherine Russell

Ofsted Inspector

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