

Inspection of Unicorn Primary School

Creswell Drive, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3AL

Inspection dates: 11–12 September 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told us how much they enjoy school. They spoke in glowing terms about their teachers. They said that teachers' high expectations mean that they learn more. Residential trips, outdoor learning and many clubs all add to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

Through the 'Unicorn Promise', pupils learn how to keep trying when faced with challenges. Pupils take a keen interest in the school's development. The pupil parliament, library team and travel ambassadors provide opportunities for pupil responsibility. Pupils have created characters such as 'respectful Rosie' and 'bounce back Bertie' to help everyone develop their understanding of respect and resilience.

Pupils feel well cared for and safe at school. They are confident that staff will listen to concerns and sort out any difficulties, including bullying if it occurs. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are able to discuss their ideas and they show respect for the views of others.

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

The headteacher and senior leadership team set high expectations and want to provide the best education possible. Staff and pupils work hard and, as a result, pupils achieve above national standards.

Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics. This is because teachers plan the steps pupils need to take when solving increasingly complex mathematical problems. Pupils enjoy their learning and the breadth of subjects taught. Pupils learn science, history and geography through project work. These topics are organised on a two-year cycle, taking into account pupils' interests and available resources. While they cover a range of interesting themes, the sequence of learning in these areas is not joined up. Pupils do not learn all the knowledge they should. Leaders have started to change the way these subjects are taught so that pupils can make better progress in learning and remembering important knowledge.

Teachers understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support and achieve well.

Pupils learn the basics of reading from an early age. They develop the skills needed to become confident and fluent readers. As pupils move through the school, they enjoy more challenging texts. Teachers identify those pupils who need additional help to develop their reading skills and offer effective support. Teachers encourage pupils to read a variety of books across a wide range of subjects. Talking with us, pupils enthusiastically discussed books such as 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Wuthering Heights'.

Pupils develop character through taking part in residential trips. From Year 3, pupils

experience spending nights away from home. Visits (including to Kew Gardens, the Natural History Museum, and to see a production of 'The Wind in the Willows') give pupils a chance to deepen their knowledge. In addition, pupils enjoy a range of clubs and activities which include gymnastics, cheerleading, chess and creative writing.

In the Reception classes, children learn the routines and expectations of behaviour. They behave well and play safely. Children are polite and are able to talk about their activities, using a good range of vocabulary. Staff check what children can do and ensure that they gain a secure foundation in reading and mathematics.

Staff morale is high. Teachers share the headteacher's vision. They work diligently and make good use of many professional development opportunities to improve their teaching.

Governors and trustees bring a wealth of experience to their roles and are ambitious for the school. They support leaders in their work and hold them to account when appropriate.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are well trained and know how to protect pupils from harm. The leaders for safeguarding are knowledgeable. Where necessary, they work closely with external agencies to support pupils and their families.

Pupils are well informed about a range of issues, including knowing how to stay safe online. The school provides helpful information for parents and carers, such as how to keep their children safe when they are using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- English, mathematics, art and modern languages are all well planned and delivered. Plans in history, geography and science require further development to enable content to be delivered sequentially and build pupils' secure understanding.
- Leaders should also ensure that the quality of education in history, geography and science is as strong as in the other subjects through more subject-specific training for staff.
- Transitional arrangements have been applied because curriculum plans for some subjects are still being developed and are not as far advanced as in English, mathematics, art and modern languages.

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're 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	142300
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10088803
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	471
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Medhurst
Headteacher	Susan Robertson
Website	www.unicorn.bromley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2018

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school converted to an academy in September 2015, joining the Compass Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust. The trustees have established a local governing body for this school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), is below the national average.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Together with senior leaders, we visited lessons in Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2. During these visits, we talked to pupils about their learning. Curriculum leaders joined us to look at work in pupils' books. Pupils from Years 2 and 3 read to us and talked about how they were learning to read.
- We looked at reading, mathematics, history and art in depth as part of this inspection.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders for the early years and SEND, and a range of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, the chief executive officer and the chair of trustees. In addition, the lead inspector met with the school improvement partner.
- We met with pupils formally and informally. Four pupils took the lead inspector on a tour of the school to talk about their learning and other experiences at school.
- We met with parents informally at the start and end of the school day and took account of parents' views through the Ofsted survey.
- We scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement; information relating to safeguarding and attendance; information about behaviour management; information relating to the school's use of the pupil premium funding; documents relating to pupils with SEND; the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils; and minutes from meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Carolyn Dickinson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
James Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Brooks	Ofsted Inspector
Laura Pease	Ofsted Inspector

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