

Inspection of Downsell Primary School

Downsell Road, Leyton, London E15 2BS

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school benefit from being in a safe, inclusive and caring setting. This starts in the early years where children enjoy playing and learning together in a stimulating and very well-resourced environment. Pupils are polite and kind. They listen to their teachers, and they work hard in lessons. Pupils study a rich and carefully considered curriculum that is broad and balanced. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and make lessons interesting. This results in enthusiastic learners.

A range of different activities enrich this curriculum further. The school broadens pupils' horizons with whole-school trips to landmarks in London and to the seaside. Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They are very aware of online risks, and they know they can talk to a number of different adults in the school if they have any concerns.

Staff and leaders know the pupils and families very well. This helps to ensure that all pupils access the curriculum successfully. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), for whom provision is particularly strong. The school goes the extra mile to support families, for example offering English lessons for parents and carers who are new to the United Kingdom.

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

The school has made sure that the curriculum pupils study is carefully sequenced. Leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This content has been put together in a logical way so that pupils can draw on their prior knowledge to help them with new learning. For example, in geography lessons, Year 5 pupils can use previously learned knowledge of compass points to identify the sources of rivers on maps. In lessons there is a strong focus on important vocabulary. Teachers emphasise the words they know pupils need to understand and regularly refer to these within lessons and over a sequence of lessons. This benefits all pupils but is especially useful for pupils with SEND or those who are at the early stages of learning English. Children in Nursery and Reception also benefit from a language-rich environment.

The teaching of reading is prioritised. Children learn their letters and sounds from very early on in Reception. The school makes sure that the early books that children read match the sounds they are learning. Teachers identify any children who need more help to keep up with their classmates. These pupils benefit from regular extra lessons. As pupils get older, they go on to read more challenging books. These books are explored in depth and are closely linked to other areas of the curriculum. The very well-resourced library is busy with pupils choosing and reading books.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding, and they help pupils to remember more. For example, in mathematics, lessons start with activities that revisit earlier work. Staff present information clearly and are diligent in teaching the curriculum as

it is intended. Pupils with SEND are very well supported to follow the same curriculum as their peers. On occasions, although the subject content is covered in lessons, teachers do not make sure pupils are secure in their understanding. This can lead to some gaps in pupils' knowledge.

There is a calm and friendly atmosphere around the school. This starts in the early years where children learn good habits for listening and following instructions. Children play and learn together well, taking turns and showing kindness. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They attend school regularly. Pupils know that unkind or discriminatory language is unacceptable.

The school provides a range of different activities and projects to promote pupils' wider development. A structured programme of personal, social and health education teaches pupils important life skills such as staying safe and eating healthily. In addition to the regular excursions beyond the classroom, pupils can attend a range of clubs such as cookery, multi-sports and coding. Some pupils take on leadership roles, helping younger children in the school. Although there are numerous activities and initiatives, the school does not yet have a clear overview of which pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are accessing these opportunities.

Governors know the school well. They have the experience and skills to carry out their statutory duties and to hold leaders to account. Governors and leaders share the same vision for an inclusive and caring school. Staff are very well supported by leaders to carry out their roles. This includes teachers who are new to the profession. Staff are proud to work in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes the school does not ensure that pupils are secure in the knowledge they have been taught before moving on. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge or develop misconceptions that are not quickly addressed. The school should continue to develop pedagogy so that teachers ensure pupils are secure in their understanding of subject content so that they can progress through the curriculum as intended.
- The school does not have a coherent overview of the very many opportunities that are in place to promote pupils' wider development. This makes it difficult to track all the activities and to ensure that pupils from all backgrounds are taking advantage of these. The school should strengthen systems to identify all the opportunities that support pupils' wider development to ensure that these benefit all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

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	103044
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10289862
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Backhouse
Headteacher	Deena Chetty
Website	www.downsellprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 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 routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked to teachers and pupils. The inspectors talked to leaders and looked at curriculum information and pupils' work for a range of other subjects including writing, French and religious education. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the leadership team and members of staff, as well as with a range of pupils.
- 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.
- The inspectors spoke with parents and considered the survey responses from parents and staff.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ben Carter	Ofsted Inspector
David Bryant	Ofsted Inspector

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