

John Bunyan Primary School and Nursery

Lancaster Way, Braintree, Essex CM7 5UL

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have amalgamated two schools while at the same time successfully raising standards, expectations and aspirations.
- The inspirational headteacher leads by example. Pupils do well because she focuses on long-term sustainable improvements.
- Leaders at all levels have improved outcomes at key stages 1 and 2. They are now either in line with or approaching national standards.
- Staff are a tight-knit and effective team whose dedication and passion ensure that they do their best for their young people.
- Governors provide highly effective support and challenge. They bring a blend of essential experiences and useful skills to their roles.
- Pupils behave well. All staff model the importance of being 'fair, kind, respectful and making great choices'.
- Teachers' high-quality planning, reflective practice and secure subject knowledge enable pupils to make good progress.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school. Pupils work hard because staff listen and care for them well.
- The school is highly inclusive and is the hub for the local community, working with and for parents to secure better outcomes for pupils.
- Staff benefit from innovative training programmes that have led to significant improvements in the school's effectiveness.
- Pupils make good progress over time because they work hard and are well taught.
- The early years provision is led well. From low starting points, children make good progress because they are helped to grow in confidence.
- Leaders use the additional funding well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is very well complemented by specialist teachers and extra-curricular activities that help pupils develop socially and academically.
- Leaders have secured improvements in pupils' attendance. However, overall attendance remains below the national average.
- With work precisely matched to meet their needs, a few most able pupils could achieve more.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and raise attainment by ensuring that work for most-able pupils is planned precisely so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve greater depth.
- Improve attendance by working more closely with specific families in order to improve the attendance of all groups of pupils to the national level.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have transformed the school and greatly improved the standard of education that pupils receive. Through meticulous planning and working on long-term sustainable improvements, they now provide a school that serves the needs of its pupils extremely well, while remaining at the heart of its community.
- The effective and highly regarded headteacher has painstakingly guided staff through some difficult times. The passion and dedication that all staff show have changed the culture within the school to one where pupils now want to do well. Pupils now aspire to achieve because of the raised level of expectation, such as the links with universities. This encourages pupils to look beyond what they previously thought they could do and be more ambitious.
- This is an inclusive school, where the high-quality care and nurturing environment support pupils extremely well. One parent echoed these sentiments when she said: 'I am very happy with this school. It has really helped encourage and support my daughter. She absolutely loves being at school and that makes it a great school in my eyes. The staff are all fantastic here and genuinely care about the pupils.'
- Through their universal insistence on raising standards for staff as well as pupils, leaders at all levels have cultivated a cohesive team. The comments from the staff questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. There are frequent and wide-ranging opportunities for staff to develop professionally. Staff spoke about the value of the training they receive, highlighting the use of research-based initiatives and the close working with other schools as being particularly useful in helping them to develop their practice further.
- The curriculum is broad, relevant and carefully tailored to meet the needs of its pupils. Alongside the traditional curriculum, leaders' focus on the arts broadens pupils' cultural awareness, and the use of specialist teachers extends pupils' knowledge and understanding well. A broad range of clubs and after-school activities increase engagement with parents and address local needs well. The highly popular breakfast club ensures that pupils arrive promptly and are ready to learn. Pupils value the extra-curricular activities on offer, saying that they help them to learn different skills and work better as part of a team.
- Leaders monitor pupils' progress and attainment closely and have a clear picture on how well pupils are doing. Their effective actions have resulted in standards rising across all areas. Senior leaders carry out frequent and systematic checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The observations, drop-ins, scrutiny of pupils' work and learning walks that leaders at all levels complete give them a deep understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that the additional government funding is used effectively. Spending for disadvantaged pupils is carefully targeted to help pupils catch up in their learning by reinforcing basic skills. Staff also support the families to ensure that pupils attend well. Parents spoke about how the help they have received has helped some children, who were reluctant to go to school, to become far better attenders. Leaders monitor

the effectiveness of their spending closely. The published academic progress for Year 6 disadvantaged pupils is now broadly in line with all pupils nationally.

- The sport premium funding is used to provide three sports coaches organising a range of clubs such as fencing, curling, golf and mindfulness. Alongside the high-quality dance provision, this enables pupils to broaden their horizons and learn useful skills.
- The management of teachers' performance is used well to raise standards. Teachers' targets are linked closely to how well their pupils achieve, and also include whole-school improvement priorities and teachers' own training and development.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have their needs met well. Staff have a precise understanding of pupils' needs and deploy additional adults to good effect. They use a range of strategies, such as visual timetables and bespoke support, to help pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed very successfully. The high visibility of the school's code of conduct ensures that pupils are 'fair, kind, respectful and make great choices'. They are polite, friendly and willingly engage visitors in conversation. Pupils are tolerant of others' ideas and see democracy in action through their work with local councillors on planning applications.

Governance of the school

- Governors have supported the headteacher well and have been instrumental in driving forward significant improvements. Their recent skills audit shows that they possess a good range of essential experiences and desirable skills. They have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development, and ask appropriate questions of leaders to push standards higher. The regular updates they receive as a result of leaders' comprehensive monitoring processes keep them well informed.
- Governors are very 'visible'. They all visit regularly and report back to other governors on their key areas of responsibility. They know the journey the school has been on, and continue to support and challenge leaders to drive standards even higher.
- Governors are keen to ensure that the school maintains its focus to serve the local community. Parents spoken to are very positive about the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school serves its community well. Safeguarding is given a very high profile and staff are acutely aware of pupils' welfare and safety.
- Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when using social media. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They talk knowingly about the rules to keep them safe, such as the yellow line where running stops and they have to walk into school. Staff, pupils and parents all agree that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school that enables pupils to feel safe.

- Safeguarding arrangements are robust and rigorous. Staff are well trained to meet pupils' diverse needs. Staff register concerns appropriately and these are handled quickly and efficiently. Case files are detailed and record information accurately. Staff work effectively with external agencies, and governors are kept up to date about safeguarding matters.
- Governors monitor the school's safeguarding processes to ensure that these are robust. They make sure that all the required checks are carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- As with other areas in the school, the culture across all key stages has changed because teachers expect more of pupils and what they can achieve. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers model clearly what they want pupils to do.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain difficult concepts well. Where practice is most effective, teachers are aware of the areas that pupils find difficult and use a range of activities to guide them through challenging concepts.
- Teachers check regularly that pupils understand the work they are covering. Where misconceptions exist, most teachers adapt learning to ensure that the gaps in pupils' knowledge are filled.
- The strong relationships that have been carefully built between pupils and teachers are a common feature of the school. Teachers expect pupils to work hard, be respectful of others' viewpoints and behave well. Pupils respond positively, helping them to make good progress over time.
- Teachers help pupils to develop good speaking and listening skills by planning carefully a range of activities that capture pupils' interests. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding, and help pupils achieve more by insisting that they answer questions in more depth.
- Additional adults are deployed carefully so that they are used effectively to support pupils. Staff are very active in their support of individuals and use a range of strategies that provide a good balance of support, while allowing pupils to develop independent skills that will help them in the future.
- Teachers use information about pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to support them to learn well, so that they make progress in line with other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Although teaching is now consistently good, some pupils do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable. While pupils are now reaching national averages across most areas, by ensuring that work for the most able is planned more precisely, a greater proportion of pupils could achieve greater depth.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff use their in-depth knowledge of their pupils well to keep them safe and support them academically and socially. Pupils follow clear, fair and firm guidelines on how to behave and treat others. They are kind to each other because they understand and follow the school's code of conduct well.
- The school is a highly inclusive place to learn. All staff and pupils are treated equally and fairly. Leaders and staff deal with pupils' behaviour calmly, effectively and systematically. The number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing, and there have been no permanent exclusions since the amalgamation.
- Pupils benefit from the many opportunities they have to work in small groups with other pupils, including in different age groups. This helps them to learn valuable social and communication skills.
- The school caters effectively for the welfare and personal development of its vulnerable pupils. Staff work closely and highly effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help that they need.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They are able to describe how the school keeps them safe through what they have learned in assemblies, tutor time and across the curriculum.
- Pupils say that there are a few children in the school who are unkind to other pupils. They add that staff deal with incidents well when they do occur, and help to resolve matters quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day. They are well mannered, polite, and move quickly and sensibly around the school site. Pupils play nicely together at breaktimes and enjoy talking with friends at mealtimes. Pupils' behaviour reflects the efforts staff make to promote high standards.
- Staff make their expectations about how to behave very clear. All are expected to follow the school's code of conduct. Pupils take this on board and treat each other kindly. When pupils do make mistakes, staff help them to manage their behaviour and develop self-discipline. As some Year 6 pupils said, 'We lost time off our break yesterday, but we have learned from our mistakes and had a great break today.'
- During the inspection, staff were seen comforting a few pupils who were clearly upset. Pupils confirm that staff are good at listening to their worries and help them deal with any friendship problems.

- Overall attendance is slightly below average. There are some groups of pupils whose attendance is lower still. Leaders are familiar with these groups and could talk through the unique circumstances for each case. Leaders' five-point attendance action plan is leading to improvements, but they remain aware of the importance of both supporting yet monitoring these groups closely to improve their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes are on an upward rising trend. This is because leaders' actions have led to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment, and raised everyone's expectations. Pupils currently in the school make good progress in a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Children enter Reception with skills and understanding that are typically below those for their age. Staff work closely with local pre-schools to ensure that the children's needs are identified quickly and met well. Consequently, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has risen steadily and is now close to the national average. This represents good progress and prepares children well for learning in key stage 1.
- Leaders have overseen significant improvements in the teaching of phonics. Last year, the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check rose steeply and are now close to the national average.
- Pupils' outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 are showing steady improvements, and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard is getting closer to national figures. The school's own information and pupils' work in books show that the vast majority of current pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end key stage 2 have shown continuous improvements and are now in line with national standards. Pupils' progress is broadly in line with national figures. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is in line with, and in some cases exceeds, that made by their peers. The school's comprehensive tracking systems identify pupils who fall behind, so that support is given to help them catch up.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Leaders ensure that support is carefully tailored to meet pupils' needs well.
- At the end of key stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, a smaller proportion of pupils than that seen nationally achieve the higher standard.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Staff work well together to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and welfare requirements are met.

- The Nursery and Reception classrooms provide a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment. Children develop good collaboration skills, treat each other kindly and develop positive attitudes to learning through being encouraged to take part in activities. Inspectors observed children sharing 'colander hard hats' when exploring space and packing suitcases together for their holiday at the beach.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception Years make good progress from their different starting points. This is particularly evident in their personal, social and emotional development because supporting adults demonstrate appropriate behaviours well and give positive feedback.
- Relationships between children and adults are a strength. Children display confidence and can talk about what they are doing, what they have learned and which activities they enjoy the most.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths of the provision. She has successfully overseen improvements in children's progress, so that the proportion of children demonstrating a good level of development has increased steadily over the last three years and is now approaching the national average.
- Nursery and Reception classrooms are well organised to help children access a broad range of learning activities. Staff carefully model their high expectations of the children well. Children make good progress because teachers take account of what children know and can do to plan activities that meet children's needs effectively.
- Children make good progress from their different starting points because teachers use resources effectively, meaning that children are interested and enthusiastic about learning. Teachers have clear structures and routines in place that ensure children settle quickly, listen carefully and follow instructions.
- Phonics is taught effectively. Children demonstrate a good level of phonics knowledge that helps support their reading. Some children receive intensive support to help them blend sounds to make words and then use them appropriately in sentences. Most children are adept at recognising letters and their associated sounds, preparing them for Year 1 well.
- Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress through regular meetings and assessments that are shared through online learning journals. Parents talked very positively about the school –for example, 'My children are very happy and love coming to school.'

School details

Unique reference number	114818
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10048998

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	593
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Hill
Headteacher	Deborah Bailey
Telephone number	01376 321 814
Website	www.johnbunyan.co.uk
Email address	admin@johnbunyan.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This was the first inspection since the John Bunyan Infant and Nursery School and the John Bunyan Junior School amalgamated to become a community primary and nursery school in January 2016.
- The school is a larger than average-sized primary and nursery school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage.
- The school met the floor standards set by the Department for Education for the achievement of pupils in Year 6 in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations across all year groups, many of which were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked carefully at pupils' work and talked to pupils, both formally and informally, from different year groups to discuss their experience of the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. An inspector also held a telephone conversation with the headteacher from a partnership school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation including safeguarding records, case studies, attendance records, self-evaluation summaries, the school improvement plan and current assessment information.
- Some parents mentioned difficulties accessing Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, during the inspection. As such, there were very few responses. Inspectors did take account of the school's own parental survey information and talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 34 pupils, three parents who left free-text comments and 53 members of staff from the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Randall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachael Judd	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Hackett	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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