

Inspection of a good school: Cauldwell School

Edward Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9DR

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

Outcome

Cauldwell School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils sum up best what it is like to attend Cauldwell school by saying 'I feel special' and 'my voice is heard'. Pupils know that they are valued. They like the fact that adults give them plenty of encouragement to achieve their best. Pupils respond splendidly to leaders' emphasis on supporting them to be safe, to become fluent speakers and readers, and to be kind.

The pupil population is a rich social and cultural mix. Pupils mingle happily together. They enjoy learning with and about each other. Their relationships with adults are founded on mutual respect. Pupils feel safe. Their sense of security is evident in their confidence as they go about their work and play.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They react positively to praise from adults. If a pupil's behaviour falls below the commonly understood high standards, adults and pupils are quick to put it right.

Pupils know that friendships are not always plain sailing. They say, 'We don't usually fall out. When we do, we fix it'. Pupils struggled to recall any incidents of bullying in their school. They said they could turn to any adult if an issue did crop up.

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

Leaders, staff, governors and the trust share a firm belief that no pupil has insurmountable barriers to academic and social success. The school's well-designed curriculum reflects this belief, and leaders' high ambitions for pupils. It is underpinned by a focus on pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills as well as their personal and social development.

Leaders, in their own words, 'loudly bang the drum of reading'. Adults are well trained to teach pupils to read. They do so effectively. From Reception through to Year 6, adults model high-quality reading, speaking and listening. Their enthusiasm sparks pupils'

interest. Adults make it fun for pupils to learn to read on a day-to-day basis. Pupils enjoy and gain a lot from events such as 'spooky story' days.

Each day in Reception, children read books and hear stories that reinforce the sounds they are taught. They delight in learning new words and reading and writing them with accuracy. Staff make sure that most older pupils retain this enjoyment of reading. Pupils and staff value the daily 'drop everything and listen' sessions. Many pupils become fluent readers.

The principles that underpin the reading curriculum also exist in most other subjects. Leaders' curriculum plans make it clear to teachers what details and words pupils should learn. Teachers have a good knowledge of most subjects and how to teach them. Teachers choose resources that stimulate pupils' thinking. Teachers emphasise important vocabulary. Pupils remember what they have been taught and produce good-quality work. Senior leaders are working to appropriate timescales to build teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum. There are a small number of subjects where this work is not complete.

A lot of pupils join the school throughout the year and in all year groups. Many have little experience or knowledge of the English language. Pupils and staff are welcoming to newcomers. There are efficient processes to establish pupils' needs and capabilities. Pupils start learning English at the earliest opportunity. They are well supported to access the school curriculum. They soon become confident members of the Cauldwell family.

Adults' effective support for pupils, including pupils with SEND, to become assured and considerate individuals is plain to see. From the start of Reception, adults help pupils to understand and follow the school's routines and expectations of their behaviour. Individuals' successes are celebrated in daily conversations, assemblies, displays and honours such the 'weekly special person' award. Pupils take on important, respected leadership roles, such as prefects and 'buddies'. Visitors cannot fail to notice the sense of 'family' that this all generates.

Teachers make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their classmates. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, are taught to recognise and manage emotions and feelings. Some get expert extra support in 'The Hub'. Pupils develop the knowledge and resilience to stick at learning and friendships. Most pupils attend enrichment activities at the end of each school day.

Staff play their full part so that pupils are safe, confident and make progress in their learning. Adults took, and continue to take, extra steps to do so during the national pandemic. Staff say that they appreciate the actions that leaders take to support them in their work and personal lives.

The trust and local advisory board (local governance board) work effectively in partnership to provide leaders with well-informed scrutiny and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know that, 'If pupils are not safe and happy, nothing else matters'. All parents, pupils and staff spoken with or who responded to surveys consider that pupils are safe at Cauldwell School. Pupils are taught strategies to stay safe, including when online.

Leaders provide staff with regular updates and training. Staff follow school procedures without delay to report concerns they may have about a pupil's well-being. Leaders act decisively and in pupils' best interests to ensure that they and their families get the help they need.

The trust and governors check that the school meets its safeguarding obligations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' plans in many subjects make it clear what knowledge pupils should learn and the best order in which to teach it. Teachers have received suitable support and training to teach the curriculum well in these subjects. In a few subjects, appropriate plans are in place, but teachers have not had the same level of guidance to deliver them as effectively. Where this is the case, leaders should provide teachers with direction and support so that they are well placed to deliver the curriculum as effectively in all subjects.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, also called Cauldwell School, to be good in June 2013.

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	144528
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10200445
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	408
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hoare
Headteacher	Judith Apps
Website	www.cauldwellschool.com/
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Cauldwell School is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- Large numbers of pupils arrive or leave at times other than the start of each academic year.
- There are very high proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in mathematics, personal, social, health and relationship education, and reading.
- For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to several pupils read.

- The inspector also spoke with subject leaders and looked at curriculum plans and some pupils' work in a small number of other subjects.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders, including the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the family support worker.
- The inspector looked at school documentation and spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, members of the local advisory board, pupils, parents and representatives from the trust, to establish the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector met those responsible for governance. In this meeting were three members of the local advisory board, including the chair of the board, and the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer and one other representative from the trust.
- The inspector also spent time observing and speaking with pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents expressed in the 21 responses to the Parent View and in the discussions held with some parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. The school's analysis of its own surveys of parents' opinions was also considered.
- The inspector considered the views in the seven responses to the pupil survey, 31 responses to the staff survey and an email received from a member of staff over the course of the inspection.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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