

Inspection of a good school: Bridgewater Park Primary School

Plantation Close, Castlefields, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2LW

Inspection date: 30 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this school. They enjoy their lessons and the many interesting activities that their teachers provide. For example, pupils take part in fun after-school clubs, such as musical theatre and gymnastics. They are excited to take part in the wide range of trips, such as visits to museums.

Leaders are ambitious to improve how well pupils achieve. This is because pupils do not achieve as well as they should, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are beginning to make improvements in their learning. This is because leaders are taking decisive steps to improve the curriculum.

Pupils feel safe in school. They describe their teachers as kind and caring. Pupils know that adults in school will listen to any of their worries and help them. Pupils know that leaders will take swift action should any bullying occur. Pupils benefit from well-being support. For example, when needed, pupils can go to the sensory room for calm, quiet space.

In lessons and around school, pupils show respect to others. They strive to achieve the school's values, such as kindness and collaboration. This starts in the early years class, where children play happily together.

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

Leaders have identified that the school's curriculum has not developed pupils' learning well enough in some subject areas. Leaders have taken resolute steps to improve curriculum plans in order to strengthen pupils' learning.

Across subjects, leaders have set out the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember. They have made sure that the curriculum plans build pupils' learning in clear and well-ordered steps. The plans show how pupils will revisit and build on their learning as they move through the school. For example, in history topics, pupils learn about important themes, such as monarchy and settlement. However, in most subjects, the changes to the curriculum plans are at an early stage of implementation. The changes are starting to help pupils to remember more of their learning.

In mathematics and English, leaders make careful and regular checks to see how well pupils are learning. However, systems to check how well pupils are remembering the curriculum in most other subjects are not in place. This means that leaders do not have an overview of how well pupils are learning the curriculum in these subjects.

Leaders have made sure that reading lies at the heart of the school's curriculum. In the early years class, children enjoy listening to staff read stories from a wide range of books. Across the school, pupils have many opportunities to read with their teachers, friends and quietly on their own. Pupils enjoy reading and know that it is important. As one pupil said, 'If you can't read well, you won't get anywhere in life.'

Phonics teaching starts when children join the school. Staff are experts in teaching phonics in a carefully planned way. Leaders make regular checks on how well pupils are learning. They identify those pupils who need extra support with their reading. Teachers ensure that these pupils read regularly in school. A small number of pupils have not developed fluency in reading. Leaders are taking steps to make sure that these pupils read books which are more closely matched to the phonics that they know.

Some staff are new to their roles, including as subject leaders. They are developing their experience. However, they have not had recent training in most curriculum areas. This means that some staff have not fully developed their expertise when teaching and monitoring the curriculum in some subject areas.

Staff work closely with parents, carers and professionals, such as the educational psychologist, to identify pupils with SEND. Staff give this group of pupils a wide range of support to help them to learn.

Leaders are thoughtful in providing a wide range of interesting and diverse experiences to enrich pupils' learning. For example, pupils visited a canal as part of their local history learning. They spoke with enthusiasm about what they had seen and learned about local transport systems. Staff provide a wide range of after-school clubs, which are enjoyed by pupils in all classes, including children in the early years.

Everyone in school understands the school's behaviour policy. Pupils behave well. They work with concentration in lessons, independently and with other pupils. Pupil anti-bullying ambassadors help teachers to make sure that all are treated with respect. Those pupils who need extra help with their behaviour benefit from a range of carefully planned support from staff.

Trustees and governors visit the school regularly. They provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support for leaders. Governors keep a careful check on the arrangements for pupils with SEND.

Leaders, governors and trustees are mindful of staff well-being and workload when making decisions. Staff are working hard to improve the curriculum. They feel well supported by leaders.

In discussion with the principal, the inspectors agreed that history and art and design may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular and effective safeguarding training for all staff. This ensures that all are alert to possible signs of abuse. Staff understand how to report any concerns that they have to leaders. Leaders take swift and appropriate action when needed. They work with a range of professionals to protect pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils get the support that they need to stay safe.

Pupils learn about dangers that they may face. For example, visitors to school teach pupils about the dangers of knife crime. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have revised curriculum plans in most subjects and these are at an early stage of implementation. It is too soon to see the full impact that the improved plans will have in supporting how well pupils learn and remember the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the revised curriculum is delivered as intended in order to improve pupils' learning.
- Subject leaders have not developed systems for checking how well pupils are learning the revised curriculum plans in some subjects. Leaders should put in place checks on how well pupils are remembering important knowledge in these subjects. Teachers should use this information to identify any pupils who need extra support.
- Some teachers and subject leaders are new to their roles. These staff have not had recent curriculum training and have limited experience in developing and monitoring the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive high-quality training which develops their expertise in carrying out their new roles.

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 school to be good in November 2016.

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	140612
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10204421
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Margaret Cassin
Principal	Karen Murphy
Website	www.bridgewaterpark.halton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection. This includes the appointment of a new principal and vice principal.

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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about some other subjects.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They held meetings with the principal, the chief executive officer of the trust and governors.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation, which included the leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- There were no responses to the survey for staff and the pupils' surveys.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They spoke with staff to explore their understanding of how to keep pupils safe. They reviewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors met with the principal, staff and pupils to discuss provision for pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour. They looked at documentation associated with these areas.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss leaders' support for them.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sonja Oyen

Ofsted Inspector

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