

Inspection of a good school: Bushey and Oxhey Infant School

Aldenham Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 2QH

Inspection dates:

1–2 December 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?

Bushey and Oxhey Infant School is a happy, caring place for pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Pupils like to read and they like the books the teachers read to them. However, the reading curriculum and how it is delivered does not bring out the best in all pupils.

Pupils like the activities that teach them about the school values to be aspirational, respectful and kind. For example, pupils spoke excitedly about the 'Elf Run' to raise money for a local charity and they enjoy being able to help their parents maintain the school allotment. In this way, pupils, parents and staff are very community minded.

Pupils behave well and value the rewards they receive for being kind. They say these rewards put smiles on their parents' faces. Pupils say that bullying does not happen often. They speak confidently about being able to talk to staff about their problems and this helps pupils to feel safe.

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

Leaders have set out many priorities for improvement, including to the curriculum. However, leaders' plans are not well informed by accurate evaluation. This means that the governing board does not have a clear picture of the quality of the school's work. Having so many priorities has made it difficult for leaders to make the changes as they intended.

Leaders have not given staff the necessary support to establish a successful approach to the teaching of reading. Pupils who find reading hard do not get the right support to become fluent readers. These pupils learn new sounds when they have yet to secure sounds already taught. They struggle to read the books they receive. This is because the sounds in the books are not the ones they know. They do not get the help they need to

catch up when they fall behind. Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are disproportionately affected by this. The many stronger readers are also not taught to achieve their best. Sometimes they are encouraged to use strategies to sound out and blend words they can already read.

Leaders' improvements are having more impact in other subjects, including in the early years. Leaders have set out the important knowledge pupils should learn. Leaders sequence this clearly in curriculum planning. Teachers teach these subjects with confidence and to good effect. They choose enjoyable and appropriate learning activities for pupils to complete.

Teachers provide learning prompts that support pupils to secure their knowledge. For example, teachers teach and display the important words they want pupils to know. Pupils check these displays to help them answer questions and complete work independently. In these subjects, pupils remember a lot of what they have been taught. Their work is of good quality.

Leaders are still deciding how best to assess pupils' knowledge in some subjects. Teachers need these strategies in order to check what knowledge pupils have remembered and plan learning accordingly.

Leaders and teachers are alert to the signs that a pupil may need additional help with their learning. The special educational needs coordinator supports teachers to put effective support in place. Where this works best, the pupils with SEND get precise, effective help. They make good gains in their learning. This is not the case in reading.

Staff worked carefully to reintroduce pupils to school after periods of remote learning. Pupils behave well because staff are clear about their expectations in line with the school values. Staff and leaders work well to provide additional guidance to pupils whose behaviour occasionally falls short of the school's standards. One parent's comment that 'the school has a warm, nurturing environment where kindness is key' reflected the thoughts of many.

There is a broad range of after-school clubs. Pupils get the chance to learn, for example, French, different styles of dance, or how to build constructions using plastic bricks. Leaders have plans to reintroduce school trips. Pupils are very excited about an upcoming trip to watch a pantomime. Leaders have also invited visitors into school to help bring the curriculum even more to life. Pupils enjoyed a local Rabbi teaching them about Chanukah.

Staff at all levels care for one another. One teacher said, 'I just love working here. It's a happy place to be,' and the results of the staff survey supported this view. This is a result of leaders' hard work to build a supportive team across the two schools in the federation.

The inspector recommended that early reading, the effectiveness of governance in monitoring the curriculum and the use of assessment in the wider curriculum may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' open-door approach allows all staff to share their concerns about pupils. Leaders take appropriate actions to support pupils and their families. They complete statutory checks on staff and visitors to check they are safe to work with pupils.

Governors ask questions about pupils leaving and joining the school to check leaders are ensuring these pupils are kept safe. Leaders make sure staff are up to date with the latest safeguarding information. They aim to maintain an ethos of 'it could happen here.' Because staff members treat them kindly, pupils say they can tell any member of staff about a problem or worry.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the early reading curriculum is designed and taught effectively. They have not given staff the training and support they need to help all pupils learn to read fluently. This disproportionately affects disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Leaders must put in place a clearly structured early reading curriculum and ensure staff have the knowledge to implement it well.
- Leaders have not determined practices for assessment in some subjects. Teachers do not, therefore, have the information they need to review the impact of their work and adjust it accordingly. Leaders should select the systems for assessment and train staff to use these appropriately.
- Governors do not have a good knowledge of the quality of education in the school. School leaders produce development plans that lack clarity and are not informed by accurate evaluation. Governors find it difficult to use these plans to hold school leaders to account. Governors must ensure they receive information from leaders which enables them to set a clear strategic vision and hold leaders to account for securing school improvement.

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 third 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

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| Unique reference number | 117157 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10200286 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 160 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing board |
| Chair of governing body | Tony Breslin |
| Headteacher | Mary Ann Cooper |
| Website | http://www.oxhey.herts.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bushey Primary Education Federation with Bushey Manor Junior School.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND in the school is much lower than the national average.
- The school runs its own after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with governors, senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils and a school improvement adviser working on behalf of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and design technology. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector reviewed a range of school documentation and policies, including minutes of governing body meetings, reports from external advisers, the school's self-evaluation form and the school improvement plan.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke with staff and pupils, checked the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, reviewed minutes of meetings and reviewed records with the designated safeguarding lead and one of the deputy designated safeguarding leads.
- The inspector reviewed the 83 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the 55 free-text responses from parents. The inspector also considered 16 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and the 12 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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