

Inspection of Bedwell Primary School

Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1NJ

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

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?

The friendly and supportive atmosphere at Bedwell Primary School means that pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy their learning. They are proud to attend the school. Pupils do well and strive to meet the high expectations that staff set for them.

Pupils are confident and have well-developed social skills. They are polite and courteous towards each other and to adults. They listen to and respect the opinions of others. Many pupils are keen to take part in the range of additional activities on offer.

The school is a calm and orderly place in which to learn. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They know that they can talk to staff if they have a concern. They are confident that if bullying happens, teachers will quickly resolve it. Parents and carers strongly agree.

Pastoral care for pupils and their families is strong. Pupils feel well cared for because leaders and staff go out of their way to help and support them. One parent commented, 'There is a great sense of caring and community in the school which is lovely to send my children into every day.'

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

Leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum for all pupils that is well suited to their needs. Subject leaders have thought carefully about how pupils build their knowledge and skills over time from early years to Year 6. They have developed highly consistent planning and methods of delivery that help pupils learn well over time.

Leaders help teachers to constantly improve their subject knowledge. Teachers revisit what pupils have previously learned to enable them to know and remember more. In most subjects, pupils gain knowledge very well. However, there are a few areas of the curriculum where teachers' questioning is not precise enough to pick up pupils' misunderstandings as effectively. This means that on occasion, pupils' knowledge and understanding do not develop as well as in other subjects.

Leaders have ensured that the teaching of phonics is prioritised from the beginning of Reception. Planning is highly structured. Teachers' systematic delivery means that early readers learn sounds quickly and are soon able to blend and spell words. As a result of highly effective training, teachers use consistent approaches to help pupils develop fluency and expression. This ensures that pupils become confident readers. Any pupils who fall behind are given appropriate support to address any gaps. Pupils enjoy the carefully selected books and other texts that are available across the school and in every classroom.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers know how to adapt the curriculum and provide precise support. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well over time. However, leaders are aware that more could be done to help parents of pupils with SEND understand how to support their children's needs.

Early years staff are skilled at identifying children's social and emotional needs. The planning of the early years curriculum is strong. It links closely to the curriculum in other year groups and provides a secure foundation for children's future learning. Early years teachers use a range of activities to check children's understanding and help them remember what they have been taught.

Teachers and other adults have very positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils work with confidence and commitment. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Leaders check pupils' absence rigorously and work hard to ensure high levels of attendance. Leaders are committed to working with parents to raise attendance levels further.

Leaders have a strong commitment to supporting pupils' well-being and personal development. They have a clear understanding of their local context and the challenges that some families face. Staff provide a range of additional activities and opportunities, including sports clubs and visits to places of interest. These broaden pupils' experience and raise their aspirations.

Governors have an astute understanding of the school's context and are committed to doing the very best for the pupils. External support has been used to help governors develop a sharp understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They hold leaders to account and carefully check the quality of education in the school for themselves.

Staff are very proud to work at Bedwell Primary School. There is a tangible sense of teamwork and commitment throughout the school. Staff feel well supported by the headteacher and senior leaders, who are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are highly vigilant and know how to raise concerns they may have about pupils' welfare. Safeguarding concerns are investigated thoroughly. Leaders ensure that pupils get the help they need and arrange swift referral to safeguarding partners where appropriate.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They understand how to manage the risks they face, both physically and online. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern and are confident that it would be dealt with.

Governors monitor safeguarding effectively and ensure that appropriate checks are made on new staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, teachers' questioning does not address pupils' misconceptions as rigorously and systematically as it could. This means that pupils' knowledge and understanding do not develop as well as in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that the quality of curriculum implementation is consistently high across all aspects of the curriculum.
- Some parents of pupils with SEND feel that communication could be timelier and more informative. This means that parents may not always know how to support their children effectively. Leaders have worked hard to develop positive relationships with parents in early years. Leaders should ensure that there is a similar focus on improving engagement with parents of pupils in the other year groups.

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	117200
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10207082
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Victoria de Naeyer
Headteacher	Emma Shaw
Website	www.bedwell.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bedwell Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. This included discussions with curriculum leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, and scrutinising of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about personal, social and health education, and science and geography. Inspectors visited geography and science lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records, curriculum planning documents and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and two other members of the governing board. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement partner.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's record of employment of staff and met with the designated safeguarding leads.
- Inspectors observed pupils during unstructured social time and talked to groups of pupils about their school experiences.
- The inspection team considered 156 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 35 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 56 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 27 free-text comments by parents.

Inspection team

John Constable, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Eardley	Ofsted Inspector

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