

# Inspection of The Bluecoat School

Green Lane, The Bluecoat School, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1HE

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Inspection dates: 29 to 31 March 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected The Bluecoat School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They like playing with their friends on the playground. Pupils are proud to be 'well-being champions' or part of the 'mini police'. They are pleased that they can join in sports competitions again.

Teachers are using a new approach to managing behaviour, which is better understood by pupils. According to pupils, this has improved behaviour. Around the school, pupils are courteous and polite. They listen well during lessons. However, some pupils say that bullying happens. While all pupils know that they should tell a teacher, some choose not to do so. Until recently, leaders did not record incidents of bullying properly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) feel that they get the right support. They explain how it helps them to join in lessons. Parents praise the approachability of the staff. Families feel welcome at the school. Comments such as 'I feel that the school [has] really got to know my child's needs and support them as well as they can' are typical.

In subjects such as physical education, lessons are well organised. Pupils explain what they learned and what they are still practising. Not all subjects are planned as well as this.

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

The school is in the middle of a time of change. The trust has strengthened the leadership team during this period of transition. New leaders have begun to get to know the school well. They have identified what needs to improve. Almost all staff feel that they have been well supported through this time of change and are looking forward to working together to make the school better.

Adults and children enjoy sharing stories together. The youngest children listen carefully to the sounds that instruments make, even though they cannot see them. They are delighted when they name the instrument correctly.

Staff want children to get off to a good start. The youngest children settle well in the 'sunbeam room'. There are warm and caring relationships between adults and children. Children's additional needs are quickly spotted by adults. Leaders work closely with external agencies so that children and families get the help that they need straight away. However, staff have not always identified precisely what they want children to learn. Children play together well but the activities that they join in do not always enable them to build on what they learned before.

Changes have been made to how pupils learn phonics. Expectations are higher than before. Staff have had some training. They choose the right books for pupils so that they practise the sounds that they are learning. However, this new approach to

teaching phonics is not yet embedded from early years to key stage one. Not all staff have the subject knowledge that they need to identify precisely which sounds children know. Leaders have not yet ensured that the teaching of phonics is completely consistent.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. They are eager to start working straight away, for example when they discuss what reflected shapes would look like. Some teachers use questions well to check what pupils understand. However, not all teachers spot and address the misconceptions that some pupils have. Teachers do not always use assessment with precision to check what pupils remember.

Leaders recognise that the current curriculum does not always clearly identify what pupils need to know. In several subjects, pupils do not revisit their learning to deepen their thinking. In these subjects, pupils cannot successfully recall much prior learning. Leaders have written a new curriculum which is well sequenced from early years to Year 6. They have put in place some training so that staff know precisely what they need to teach. However, the new curriculum is at a very early stage of implementation.

Pupils are keen to know more about the world around them. They explain that it is important that they know more about different faiths so that they can support and understand their peers. However, they do not yet have a deep understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders have planned a curriculum so that pupils can learn about different types of families and how to treat others with respect. Some pupils recall this. Most pupils display tolerant attitudes, but not all.

The local academy council is newly established. Members bring valuable expertise. They have begun to work with the newly appointed headteacher to develop clear roles and responsibilities. Those responsible for governance provide leaders with effective support and challenge, even during times of instability. More-rigorous questioning is now evident.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the signs that indicate that a pupil might be at risk. Leaders now record these concerns consistently. They now check that follow-up actions always happen. Leaders know some staff need to embed their understanding of some aspects of safeguarding. They have introduced a comprehensive programme of training to develop staff knowledge further. Leaders now use expert help from the trust well.

Most pupils feel safe around school. They can explain how to keep themselves safe online. They know to tell a trusted adult if something appears on screen that worries them.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- All staff know how to record and report safeguarding concerns. Until recently, there has not been a systematic approach to recording these or the subsequent actions taken. Leaders should ensure that all staff use the new approach to consistently record concerns and actions taken. Leaders should make sure that the right systems are in place to check for trends and patterns over time.
- Leaders have written a new curriculum which clearly identifies the knowledge that all pupils, including those in early years, need to remember. This is at an early stage of implementation. Leaders need to make sure that all staff have the subject knowledge that they need to teach the new curriculum from early years to Year 6. Leaders should ensure that all teachers check and address pupils' misconceptions in all subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that British values and pupils' understanding of protected characteristics are promoted well enough through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not have the opportunity to gain sufficient understanding of these areas of personal development. Leaders should make sure that the PSHE curriculum promotes British values and protected characteristics well enough to give all pupils the opportunity to gain a good understanding of these areas of personal development.
- Until recently, inappropriate behaviour was not always reported or recorded by teachers. Some poor behaviour is not addressed well enough by staff. Leaders should make sure that all staff systematically record poor behaviour using the new system. Leaders should continue to check that staff address any recorded incidents of pupils' poor behaviour and stop it reoccurring.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148371
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199484
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Shirley Jamieson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ben Bloor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bluecoatprimary.org">www.bluecoatprimary.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Bluecoat School converted to become an academy school on 8 January 2021. When its predecessor school, The Bluecoat School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Since the previous inspection of the predecessor school, there have been several changes in the senior leadership of the school. The interim headteacher will take up her position as substantive headteacher in April 2022.
- There is provision for a small number of two-year-olds in the early years unit.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, history, mathematics, physical education and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with parents and pupils. They scrutinised documents that the school keeps and spoke with leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in small groups, during lesson times and at less-structured times of the day, such as break and lunchtimes. They considered the views expressed as part of the pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning and end of the day. They considered the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors met leaders from the Meridian Trust and the local academy council.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Hazel Henson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Aoife Galletly

Her Majesty's Inspector

Vic Wilkinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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