

Inspection of Puss Bank School and Nursery

Barracks Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 1QJ

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those who attend the resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND), flourish at this large, friendly school. Most parents and carers are pleased with many aspects of the school's work.

Pupils live up to the high expectations that staff have of them. Most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. Inspectors observed pupils, including children in the early years and the provision for two-year-olds, with happy and smiling faces, learning, playing and enjoying school.

Pupils feel safe. They are happy to discuss with staff any worries or concerns that they may have. Pupils behave well. They look after each other and have friends across different year groups. Pupils told inspectors that staff act quickly to resolve any instances of bullying.

Pupils actively contribute to the life of the school, for example as members of the school council and as eco-councillors. They enjoy a wide range of experiences that enhance their personal development and raise their awareness of the world around them.

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

Leaders have a secure overview of the school's strengths and the refinements that are needed to develop further the quality of education that the school provides.

Working with staff, governors and trustees, leaders have designed a curriculum that is purposeful and meets the needs of pupils who attend the school, including those pupils who attend the specially resourced based provision.

Many subject curriculums are sequenced well. Subject leaders give appropriate guidance to teachers about the key knowledge that pupils must learn and the order in which this content should be delivered. However, at times, in some subjects, leaders have not clearly identified what they want pupils to know by the end of a topic. As a result, teachers lack clarity about what pupils are working towards.

Subject leaders are suitably trained and many monitor their areas of responsibility effectively. For instance, staff have accessed subject-specific training in many subjects to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to teach subjects within the curriculum.

In some subjects, there are effective systems in place to check that pupils' learning over time is secure. However, these systems are less well developed in some other subjects in the wider curriculum. Consequently, these subject leaders do not have a secure enough overview of how well pupils are achieving in their subjects.

During lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and deal with misconceptions well. Teachers make effective use of assessment strategies to check pupils' understanding before moving them on to more complex learning. Most pupils, including those in the early years, listen well in class. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts learning. Teachers deal effectively with pupils who are struggling to regulate their behaviour.

Within the early years, including the provision for two-year-olds, there is a clear focus on developing children's communication skills, resilience and independence. Staff seize every opportunity to develop language and early literacy skills.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. The teaching of phonics begins as soon as children start in the Reception class. Staff carefully match the books that pupils read to the sounds that they know. Those pupils who are struggling to read are supported well through appropriate interventions. Older pupils talk confidently about their favourite authors and the different types of books that they like to read.

Pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced based provision, have their needs identified quickly. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that these pupils get the support that they need.

Leaders have established strong links with representatives in the local community and pupils enjoy a range of exciting trips and clubs. Pupils understand what they must do to promote their physical and mental health. They are aware of and tolerant of differences, such as families that are not the same as their own. Pupils recognise the importance of treating the environment with respect. They are keen to help to save the planet.

Members of the local academy committee (LAC) know the school well. They challenge leaders on all aspects of their work, including their efforts to develop the quality of education for pupils.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate the way that their well-being is valued and considered by leaders. Teachers new to the profession are supported well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand that everyone is responsible for ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They have a secure understanding of what they must do if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare. For example, staff are alert to subtle changes in pupils' behaviour which may indicate that they need help. Leaders and staff work well with other agencies to support pupils and families facing challenging circumstances.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They understand the importance of not disclosing personal information or downloading apps that are not appropriate for their age. Pupils know what makes a good friend.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have, at times, not clearly identified what they want pupils to know by the end of some units of work. This means that teachers are not sufficiently clear about what pupils are working towards. Leaders should ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils should achieve so that they can design learning well.
- Leaders' systems to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum over time are less well developed in some foundation subjects. This means that leaders do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that they have a secure understanding of how well pupils learn the curriculum over time in these subjects.

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	145248
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10226209
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Bowen
Headteacher	Kathy Nichol
Website	www.pussbank.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Puss Bank School and Nursery converted to become an academy in December 2017. When its predecessor school, Puss Bank School and Nursery, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of Aspire Educational Trust.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupils.
- The school provides provision for two-year-old children.
- The school has specially resourced based provision for up to 14 pupils with SEND. This provision caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils who access this provision have an education, health and care plan.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with some members of the LAC. She also met with the deputy chief executive officer and a trustee from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. They spoke to staff about safeguarding, their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors observed behaviour as pupils moved around the school, in class, in the outdoor play area and in the dining hall.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics, science, history and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered the curriculums in other subjects.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Craig Richardson	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Tonge	Ofsted Inspector

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