

# Inspection of a good school: Bickerton Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Long Lane, Bickerton, Malpas, Cheshire SY14 8AP

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Inspection date: 28 June 2022

## **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?**

This is a happy school where pupils feel safe, work hard and get on extremely well with one another. Leaders provide a warm welcome to children and pupils at the school door each morning. This sets the tone for the school day and reflects the strong emphasis that school staff place on nurture.

Pupils behave very well at Bickerton Holy Trinity. They told inspectors that their learning is never disrupted by poor behaviour. They said that adults are always there for them and that a member of staff would deal with bullying quickly and effectively if it did occur.

Leaders have high expectations of how pupils should behave and about what they can achieve. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because, in some subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about what pupils need to learn and when they should learn it. In other subjects, some teachers do not follow the agreed curriculum.

Staff provide a wide range of after-school clubs. They also supervise activities for pupils before school each morning to ensure a smooth transition into the school day. Pupils love using this time to chat and play with their friends in the school's beautiful setting.

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

Children in the early years settle into school life quickly. From their very first days in the Reception class they learn the importance of behaving well and working hard. The calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and around the school reflects the positive attitudes that staff help children and pupils to develop. As a result, learning is rarely interrupted.

Leaders have given priority to the teaching of reading. Children in the Reception class are taught new sounds in a way that helps them to master the basics of reading quickly and securely. They develop confidence and competence by reading books that match the sounds that they have learned. Staff make regular assessments of the progress that children and pupils are making. They ensure that those who are struggling to read receive effective support that helps them to keep up with their classmates. By the end of key stage 1, almost all pupils are able to read fluently and independently. Older pupils demonstrate a passion for reading. They have access to a range of high-quality books. They also enjoy the stories that teachers read to them. By the time that they leave Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the reading challenges of the key stage 3 curriculum.

Pupils follow a broad curriculum that helps them to develop their knowledge across the full range of subjects. However, there are some weaknesses in the curriculum which prevent pupils from learning as well as they could. For example, leaders have not identified the key knowledge that pupils need to learn in the school's personal development curriculum. In some other subjects, leaders have not ensured that staff follow the agreed curriculum. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding as pupils are not building the knowledge that they need in these subjects well enough. As a result, pupils' achievement across subjects is variable and pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for the next stage of their education when they leave Year 6.

Leaders work effectively with staff to quickly identify any pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They support staff in adapting their teaching so that these pupils have access to the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils enjoy the residential visits that staff provide. They spoke with enthusiasm about their recent trip to Castleton and how they climbed hills and descended into caves. Older pupils eagerly take on the leadership responsibilities that they are given. They enjoy their roles as worship leaders, librarians and members of the school council. Even so, weaknesses in the personal development curriculum mean that pupils have gaps in their knowledge that hinder their readiness for the future.

Governors are committed to supporting the school. However, there is currently a lack of capacity on the governing body and governors are not providing enough challenge to leaders about how well the curriculum is designed or implemented.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that their work is appreciated by leaders. Those who responded to the staff survey also said that they are well supported and that leaders are mindful of their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that geography and personal development may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know their safeguarding responsibilities well. They have robust systems in place to record and monitor any concerns that staff might have about a pupil's well-being or safety. Staff receive regular training. They know how to respond if they have any concerns. Leaders follow these up in a timely manner. Governors understand their role in supporting the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils are well looked after in school and know that there is always an adult they can speak to if they have any concerns. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when they are working or playing online.

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

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

- Leaders, including governors, have not given careful consideration to what needs to be included in the school's personal development curriculum. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their learning and understanding. They are not as well prepared for their future as they should be. Leaders should identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils should acquire in each year group so that pupils can build the knowledge that they need.
- Some teachers are not following the school's agreed curriculum in some subjects. As a result, pupils are not building all aspects of their learning on what they have learned previously. Leaders should ensure that all teachers follow the school's curriculum so that pupils build their learning sequentially.
- Members of the governing body lack the information that they need about the design and delivery of the curriculum. This prevents them from offering well-informed challenge to leaders about the quality of education at the school. Governors should ensure that they gain a strong insight into the curriculum and the impact that it is having on pupils' achievement.

## 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

## **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>	111268
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226131
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	146
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Carman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Sweetnam
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bickertonprimaryschool.net">www.bickertonprimaryschool.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in September 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They spoke with the curriculum leaders of these subjects. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils. They also observed pupils reading to a member of staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the views of staff that were shared through Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation and spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experience of school.

### **Inspection team**

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Littler

Ofsted Inspector

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