

Inspection of Booker Park Community School

Stoke Leys Close, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 9ET

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 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?

For many families, Booker Park Community School is a haven, helping pupils to settle, recover and grow. Many pupils have had a challenging start to life and the care and compassion they receive here gives them great hope for the future. Pupils' medical, social and educational needs are carefully considered and met at this school, helping them to feel part of something safe and special.

As they get used to their surroundings and peers, many pupils develop friendships. Often, this is new and genuinely exciting for pupils. Laughter and joy abound, particularly on the playground where pupils play games and enjoy the sensory equipment. Pupils rarely fall out and staff keep a close eye on them at all times, preventing unkindness and bullying from becoming a problem. Many pupils need significant personal care when in school and staff attend to their needs promptly and with great compassion.

The range of opportunities pupils enjoy is extensive. Pupils love the visits to farms and galleries, taking part in sports competitions and exploring the local area. This helps pupils to expand their experience of the world around them.

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

Leaders have created a curriculum that caters for pupils with a wide range of needs. The curriculum is broken down into small steps which staff use to guide their teaching. They revisit and recap the most important learning until pupils have really remembered and understood it. This helps pupils to build firm foundations for their future learning.

Staff check methodically that pupils have learned and remembered the curriculum. They record in detail the small steps that pupils take which show the impressive progress they make over time. This helps staff to identify what is working well and to adapt the curriculum when pupils need extra help.

Staff have an excellent knowledge of pupils' needs and understand the best and most appropriate methods they should use to deliver the curriculum. For example, staff expertly support pupils to recognise their body parts through touch therapies and massage. In some instances, staff working with the most-able pupils have to make decisions about what to teach without clear training and guidance. When this is the case, staff sometimes teach content that does not align closely with the whole-school curriculum.

Right from the start, children learn to communicate well using a range of methods. Staff understand the pictorial, signed and spoken language that children should learn and repeat these often. In most instances, staff encourage all pupils to broaden their vocabulary through careful interactions and modelling. However, some

staff are not clear which words pupils need to learn next, meaning they do not give pupils enough practise hearing and communicating these.

Some pupils are able to read aloud. They benefit greatly from the school's phonics programme and practise their reading using books that contain the sounds they know. Pupils throughout the school enjoy listening to stories and singing rhymes that help to stimulate their imagination and interests.

Pupils behave well in lessons as staff constantly remind them how to use their voices and hands with kindness. Pupils are encouraged to make eye contact, greet others and listen carefully. They do this keenly, safe in the knowledge that staff will help them should they get it wrong. Classes are calm and purposeful because staff know precisely how to help pupils to control their feelings and emotions.

Staff help pupils to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed socially and personally. Pupils are taught to maintain their hygiene and care for themselves by staff who approach this in a personalised and dignified manner. Pupils learn to listen and respond to others. They use appropriate greetings, often welcoming staff and visitors with a firm and confident handshake.

Leaders and governors have put in place a staffing structure and appropriate training that has helped the school to improve. However, the challenges of the last two years have taken their toll on staff. Many have had to cover for absent colleagues and work long hours. Leaders have recruited a number of new staff for September and have plans to enhance the wellbeing of those who have been part of the journey so far.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vetted appropriately and trained extensively before starting their employment. Staff notice and record their interactions and observations in great detail, providing leaders with an accurate picture of pupils' welfare in a range of contexts. Leaders use this well to work with agencies and social workers to plan and deliver comprehensive support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils learn about their bodies and how to communicate their worries and concerns. Specialist therapists aid pupils when they need to share their experiences with other professionals.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are not all fully familiar with the precise curriculum content they need to teach. This means that too often, individual teachers, rather than subject leaders, make decisions about curriculum content, particularly in classes that cater for more able pupils. The activities they select do not always help pupils build their knowledge in a logical order. Leaders should ensure that staff receive proper

training and guidance so they can deliver the curriculum precisely as leaders intend.

- Some individual learning plans do not specify which vocabulary and language pupils need to learn next. This means staff do not always focus on promoting these words when communicating with pupils. Leaders should ensure that staff have a clear, unified understanding of the vocabulary that pupils need to learn and know the best approaches to teach these.

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	110588
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10238336
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Coneron
Co-principals	Bradley Taylor Christine Stephenson
Website	www.thevalefederation.com
Date of previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Booker Park Community School provides education for pupils who have moderate or severe learning difficulties. Some pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. The majority of pupils attending the school have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the co-principals and other senior leaders. Members of the local governing body also met with the lead inspector. The inspectors also spoke to a representative from the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, music, physical education and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, spoke to leaders and staff and held discussions with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' learning.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspectors gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussions. These discussions took place during lessons, in meetings and at breaktimes. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at various times during the school day, including breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy. The inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe. The inspectors spoke to the safeguarding leader about the recording and reporting of safeguarding incidents.
- The inspectors met some parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also met with staff and pupils to gather their views.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Ellison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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