

Inspection of Balksbury Infant School

Floral Way, Salisbury Road, Andover, Hampshire SP10 3QP

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 April, and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and nurturing community. Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils to achieve well. Each morning, happy pupils arrive feeling enthusiastic about their learning. The school's values of 'perseverance, respect and collaboration' are a crucial part of daily life. Pupils are proud of the way they always try their best and are kind to each other.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Everyone is included and feels like they belong. Any form of bullying or unkindness is not tolerated. If incidents occur, staff deal with them quickly and effectively.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They are extremely polite and courteous. Pupils understand the importance of positive behaviour and how their actions affect their friends. Children in early years show thought and care towards everyone. At playtimes, pupils from different year groups play together harmoniously. They delight in the exciting and vibrant range of activities available.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's approach. They feel that there is a strong sense of community, working in partnership and living out the shared values. As one parent said, 'Positive learning is at the heart of the school'.

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

Pupils achieve well from Reception to the end of Year 2. The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Subject leaders have identified the important concepts pupils must learn and arranged them in a logical order. However, there is more to do. For example, in the early years, and some subjects, the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember is not clear or precise enough. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to address it.

Staff are well trained to deliver the curriculum. In most subjects, they understand what to teach, when to teach it and the best techniques to deliver it. Staff present information clearly so that pupils understand what is required of them. However, staff do not assess pupils' knowledge carefully enough in a few subjects. This means they do not always identify gaps in pupils' understanding or help pupils recall knowledge quickly when needed.

Leaders have created an inclusive culture. This is reflected in how well and quickly the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified and met. All staff work as a team to ensure that pupils with SEND learn, achieve and thrive alongside their peers.

Leaders prioritise reading because all staff recognise it is central to pupils' success. Children in Reception are taught phonics from the start. They really enjoy learning

new sounds and quickly get to grips with these, blending them together to form words. By the time pupils reach Year 1, the vast majority read very well. The phonics programme is delivered meticulously because of high-quality training and ongoing support. Leaders support teachers in using a wide range of reading books to reinforce pupils' knowledge and increase their vocabulary. As a result, pupils develop their fluency and comprehension securely, in addition to a love of reading.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their learning. Classrooms are hives of activity. Pupils are highly motivated, eager and independent learners. In early years, children build their self-confidence and resilience. They engage positively in a wide variety of activities that capture their interests and spark their imagination.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities so that pupils become responsible and respectful citizens. For instance, pupils, including children in early years, plant and grow fruit bushes, salad and vegetables. This helps them learn about where food comes from. High-quality pastoral support aids pupils to develop healthy minds, look after themselves and have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. A broad range of clubs help to widen pupils' learning experiences. These include the ever-popular sports clubs, outdoor learning, choir and coding. Leaders carefully consider pupils' interests and talents in creating the offer, ensuring that cost is never a barrier.

Governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders. The vision is clear, and they are focusing on the right things to improve the quality of education. Governors have a growing understanding of the school's strengths, priorities and next steps. They ask well-informed questions to determine whether leaders' actions are having the intended impact.

Leaders have secured the full support of parents, teachers and pupils. Teachers appreciate and benefit from the high levels of expertise that leaders bring to the school. This focuses on quality training to improve the designing and teaching of the curriculum. Staff value that leaders are considerate of their workload and are mindful of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to recognise potential signs of harm in children. They report any concerns promptly, and leaders diligently make sure that these are followed up. Leaders get to know pupils and their families very well. They understand the community and whether there are any local risks. The school works effectively with other professionals to reduce harm to children and get them the help they need quickly. Information about child protection is recorded in detail and overseen precisely to ensure that no concerns are missed. Checks on adults appointed to work in the school are carried out thoroughly and monitored effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are aware that in the early years and in subjects such as Religious Education (RE) and science, the curriculum does not precisely identify the essential knowledge pupils should learn and remember. As a result, pupils do not always build and develop their knowledge and skills as effectively as they should. Leaders should ensure that curriculum information for all subjects precisely identifies the essential knowledge that pupils, including children in early years, should learn and remember well.
- Assessment within a few subjects is not yet consistently in place to improve learning. As a result, teaching is not always informed by what pupils demonstrate that they know securely, can recall quickly or apply in other areas of learning. Leaders should monitor this work carefully to ensure that pupils know and remember more. Evidence teachers collect should be used consistently to help pupils understand what they need to do next.

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	116063
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10228525
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Mirza-Davies
Executive Headteacher	Katy Thompson
Website	www.balksburyfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Balksbury Junior School under one governing body and an executive headteacher.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors first visited the school on 26 and 27 April 2022 and carried out a second visit on 6 July to complete the inspection. The following bullet points describe evidence gathered across both visits.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, school leaders, staff and pupils.

- Inspectors met with six governors, including the chair of governors. An inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, RE, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also heard pupils read.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's recruitment checks and records of concerns about child protection. An inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with leaders, pupils and staff about safety and child protection.
- An inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and school improvement plans.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and parents' written comments. An inspector also talked with parents on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their views on personal development. They also talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.
- Information about pupils' behaviour, attendance and incidents of bullying was reviewed.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, Lead inspector July 2022	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gareth Flemington, lead inspector April 2022	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alan Derry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sara Staggs	Ofsted Inspector

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