

Inspection of a good school: Bridgewater Primary School

Bridle Way, Billet Lane, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4 1ES

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

Bridgewater Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bridgewater Primary School is a friendly and welcoming place to learn. Pupils are happy and safe. They have many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils share their successes and celebrate with others during assemblies.

Teachers support pupils to become confident and resilient learners. Pupils get help with work when they need it, and this is reassuring for them. They enjoy talking about their learning and can explain what they learned in the past. Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn outside. Equally, they enjoy spending time reading in the library. Leaders have made some improvements to the curriculum that have had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Most pupils achieve well across the subjects they study. They learn what they need to be ready for the next stage in their learning.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but if it happens, the teachers resolve it well. Pupils learn to understand and respect differences. They show kindness and consideration towards others.

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

Leaders have constructed a well-considered curriculum in all subjects. In these subjects, leaders have identified the knowledge that they want pupils to learn, and organised this so that it builds on what pupils have learned previously. This helps teachers to plan activities that consider what pupils already know and can do. Teachers use their checks on pupils' learning effectively. They ensure that pupils understand previous learning well before introducing new ideas or more difficult content. This helps pupils to remember important knowledge and understand more complex ideas. Generally, teachers provide instruction and explanation that helps pupils understand how to complete activities well. Occasionally, for example in mathematics, teachers lack clarity and when this happens, pupils take longer to understand what it is they should be able to do. Leaders should

ensure they support all teachers to understand how best to teach the knowledge set out in the clearly sequenced curriculum plans.

In the early years, staff create an environment that supports their ambitious curriculum. Staff plan activities that meet the children's needs and encourage learning. Children show positive attitudes to learning through high levels of curiosity and enjoyment. Staff focus on language, which means that children can communicate well. Children learn the knowledge and develop the attitudes they need to be ready for their learning in Year 1.

Leaders prioritise reading. Their approach to teaching reading and phonics is well planned. All children learn to read words and simple sentences by the end of Reception. Pupils in Year 1 build on the phonics they learn in Reception. This means that most pupils read well and use phonics to help them sound unfamiliar words. Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension, which is appropriate to their age. A few pupils in key stage 2 who are not yet fluent readers need to learn in the same focused way as younger pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their peers. Teachers adapt the curriculum when needed to meet individual pupils' needs. Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. They make sure that pupils are well supported so they can make progress in all subjects.

Leaders support all staff well in managing pupils' behaviour. Low-level disruption is not accepted and is rare. Staff make sure that pupils learn to follow routines. Pupils behave well and are helped to make the right choices about behaviour. In the early years, children learn to manage their feelings and behaviour and to understand how others feel. Leaders identified a need to provide more support to pupils with their well-being, and the school now has a SEND support worker.

Older pupils talk about how the curriculum prepares them for being adults. They have learned about managing money, first aid and living healthy lifestyles. Pupils learn about values and how to be helpful to others. They learn about equality and different religions and cultures. Pupils know why it is important to respect the beliefs and views of others.

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education for all. They support staff with workload and make sure that staff have time to complete assessment tasks. Governors seek the views of staff, pupils and parents. Where issues are identified, actions happen as quickly as possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff have regular safeguarding training. Staff know the local concerns and risks pupils attending the school may face. They act on any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being swiftly. The designated safeguarding lead secures the help that pupils and families need. Governors make regular checks to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust.

Pupils know who they can talk to if they have any problems or need help. They learn about risks that they may face now or in the future. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and of the dangers of drinking too much alcohol.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is a small group of pupils in key stage 2 who still need to become fluent readers. They attend extra reading sessions. However, these pupils do not know all the phonics sounds. They need to learn the sounds and practise reading them. Leaders should ensure that extra support for these pupils teaches them the phonic knowledge that they need to read fluently and accurately.
- Occasionally, teaching in mathematics does not provide the instruction and explanation to help pupils to understand how to explain their thinking as leaders intended. This means that some pupils do not learn some important skills to help them build on what they already know and can do. Leaders need to ensure that teachers implement leaders' curriculum plans as intended in all subjects.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

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.

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	117541
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10206461
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Joanna Murphy
Headteacher	Andrea Bettridge
Website	www.bridgewater.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022. The headteacher was previously at the school as the deputy headteacher.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a separately registered breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken account that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders to discuss the quality of education and safeguarding for pupils.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and six members of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects, early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, and reviewed records of safeguarding. The inspector spoke to staff about the training they have received and how this helps them identify potential safeguarding concerns. The inspectors spoke to pupils to establish the extent to which they feel safe in school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtime. The inspector reviewed the support and training that staff receive to help pupils manage their behaviour.
- The inspector took account of the 239 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector considered the 50 responses to the pupil survey and the 52 responses to the staff survey. The inspector spoke to pupils to find out their views of the school.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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