

Inspection of a good school: Baytree School

The Campus, Highlands Lane, Weston-super-Mare BS24 7DX

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 June 2023

Outcome

Baytree School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Baytree Special School. 'Making the most of every day' epitomises the approach to pupils' education. Pupils get the very best possible care and education because staff know them well. They understand each pupil's unique needs. This enables them to have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils know what these are because adults make them clear, for example through modelling or use of symbols. Pupils strive to meet them in all they do.

The focus on the 'golden threads' of communication and independence are woven through every aspect of the school from the moment pupils arrive on transport. As a result, staff ensure that pupils are well regulated and ready to seize the 'amazing and memorable experiences' available to them each and every day.

Pupils experience rich and varied wider opportunities to increase their awareness of the world around them. Pupils are rightly proud of their school council. It enables them to have an active role in the school. Pupils are encouraged to, and are confident in, expressing their views and opinions. They are equipped with the strategies they need to do this with increasing independence. Pupils support each other in challenges and difficulties they face.

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

There is no ceiling on the aspirations that staff have for pupils. The education of pupils is highly ambitious and skilfully designed to meet pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. This offer is for all pupils, whether they are in school or part of the highly effective outreach provision. Leaders are not complacent in how this can be developed further. They

strive towards an education offer that is a model of excellence for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many elements of this are already in place. Leaders have ensured, first and foremost, that pupils are able to be active participants in their education. The communication framework is central to this. Staff expertly switch between methods of communication in learning time and at every other available opportunity. This ensures that each pupil, no matter how they prefer to communicate, understands what is going on and can be heard. Learning environments, not limited to classrooms but including outdoor spaces, corridors and specialist rooms, are set up to match the developing levels of independence that evolve with this. They enable pupils to thrive.

The curriculum design is bespoke and adeptly targeted to impact on pupils' whole development. It has the education, health and care (EHC) plan at its centre but is flexible to provide a responsive plan to meet the dynamic needs of individual pupils. Teachers sequence the curriculum well to build successfully on pupils' prior academic learning. They create short-term targets to prioritise progress towards the long-term outcomes in pupils' EHC plans. However, a small number of pupils' short-term targets are not adapted precisely enough. At times, this can lead to targets being retained for extended periods of time without being broken down into more specific, achievable steps.

Leaders have worked closely with external agencies to adopt and then adapt an approach to delivering phonics. They have developed a curriculum for pre and early phonics. This is ambitious and, even in its infancy, is making a marked impact on how well pupils, in the early stages of reading, are learning. This is shared with other schools and professionals. Pupils enjoy reading. They express preferences about what they read and like to listen to. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is progressive. The offer is more functional, with greater emphasis on independence, as pupils move into the older classes. In early years, there is a strong focus on books, songs and rhymes to increase children's language development. Staff are skilled in promoting interactions in a variety of communication approaches, for example using 'chat mats', symbols, high and low technology communication aids and modelling.

Leaders prioritise preparing pupils for adulthood as they transition into sixth form. This focus builds on careers-based learning, which starts in early years and continues throughout pupils' time in school. Leaders are explicit in their plan for pupils to have employer encounters and learn about the world of work from the earliest opportunity. In upper school, students' learning is strengthened with the inclusion of work experience. Students in the sixth form gain appropriately ambitious qualifications, including in English and mathematics, which helps in their preparation for their next stage.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a broad experience of likes and dislikes to support them to make preferred choices. Leaders are passionate about giving pupils a breadth of knowledge and understanding so they are active participants in the world around them with a voice of their own.

Governors know the school well. They provide leaders with a balance of support and challenge. There is a continuous cycle of school development to ensure that pupils receive the very best quality of education and care. Leaders work closely with external experts to ensure that the momentum for school improvement continues and share good practice

beyond the school community. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They praise the commitment and knowledge of staff and the care, education, love and support for their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know that the safety and welfare of pupils is fundamental. They are acutely aware of the increased vulnerabilities of pupils. Leaders ensure that staff are vigilant and know the expectations for their roles and responsibilities to report and record concerns. Leaders are tenacious in their work with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the support they need, when they need it.

Pupils feel safe. They have trusted adults they can talk to if they are worried or concerned. Staff have ensured that pupils have the communication strategies they need in order to do this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of pupils' short-term targets are not adapted precisely enough. They can be in place for extended periods of time. As a result, the curriculum that staff design from these is not as effective as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that all targets are precise enough to ensure that pupils learn successfully at every opportunity.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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	109409
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10227933
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Neil Galloway
Headteacher	Edward Bowen-Roberts
Website	www.baytreeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe and complex learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school does not currently have any three- and four-year-olds on roll.
- The school is currently working towards expanding onto a second site, which is under construction.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, heads of departments, and members of the governing body, including the chair. In addition, an inspector talked to the school's improvement adviser and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics and the physical curriculum. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, and paperwork relating to the work of the governors. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, special educational needs and/or disabilities, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. The inspector evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the pupil survey, which was adapted to make it accessible for pupils.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hester Millsop

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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