

Inspection of Bluebell Meadow Primary School

Elwick View, Trimdon Station, County Durham TS29 6JU

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

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| 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 | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

What is it like to attend this school?

Bluebell Meadow School has a highly positive culture. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school and they are safe and happy. 'Golden nugget' awards and celebration assemblies motivate pupils to try their best. Pupils and staff display the school's values of respect, honesty, kindness, resilience and responsibility. All staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils appreciate the range of activities that are available to them. Many enjoy spending time in the new library. Others take full advantage of clubs, such as the construction and mindfulness clubs. If pupils have a worry or concern, there is always an adult available for them to talk to. Some pupils are trained as well-being ambassadors. They provide help and kind words for pupils who may need a friendly face. Pupils enjoy well-being Wednesdays, which help them to develop positive mental health.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In lessons, they are engaged, attentive and enthusiastic. Teachers take time to teach younger pupils the routines and expectations of school. As a result, pupils quickly learn what is expected of them. Staff embody the school's motto, 'Where there are no limits to what we can all achieve'. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and respectful. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils have consistently highly positive attitudes in school.

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

Leaders have made significant improvements to the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils are engaged in learning. Teachers can teach without disruption. Leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn in core subjects. This knowledge is developed from Nursery to Year 6.

The curriculum for early years is ambitious. Children are encouraged to develop independence and to recognise their feelings. Children access a wide range of clearly defined activities indoors and outdoors. Children focus on a story every fortnight and learn important vocabulary related to the topics that they are learning about. Staff provide opportunities for children in early years to develop appropriate knowledge of early mathematics. Children enjoy talking about what they are learning. The early years curriculum prepares children well for their learning in key stage 1.

Reading is a priority in this school. The new lunchtime library club and librarian roles are popular. Reading is celebrated. Adults read aloud to pupils every day. Leaders have introduced a phonics programme. Staff are well trained to teach phonics lessons. Teachers make regular checks to make sure that pupils progress in their reading. If pupils fall behind, they are well supported to keep up. Pupils enjoy talking about the books that they are reading.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' knowledge of reading, English and mathematics. Teachers are beginning to use strategies to help pupils remember their learning. Pupils revisit important vocabulary and information using 'road maps' in their books. These show the key knowledge for each unit. Pupils use their road maps to help them remember previous learning. In mathematics, teachers use entry and exit tasks to check pupils' understanding. However, sometimes teachers do not use the information from their checks of pupils' learning to adapt the curriculum to help pupils learn and remember the intended content.

Pupils are engaged and motivated in lessons. They take pride in their work and enjoy talking about their learning. Leaders have strengthened the curriculum for foundation subjects, such as geography. They have identified the goals that pupils are working towards. However, leaders have not consistently identified the small steps that pupils should learn to help them to achieve these goals. As a result, pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge they could in some subjects. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to improve this.

Leaders are aspirational for all pupils. Pupils with SEND are well supported. They access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers make curriculum adaptations to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Sensory rooms and appropriate resources are used to help these pupils achieve the best outcomes. Leaders collaborate well with parents and carers and external agencies.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development. Assemblies, 'morning meetings' and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. The PSHE curriculum includes weekly mindfulness moments, and pupils have access to a mindfulness zone during playtimes. Pupils are respectful of differences between people.

Trustees and governors understand the strengths and areas to work on in the school. They are committed to the school's improvement journey. Governors provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. Leaders have invested in the development of staff across the school. Staff feel well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff access appropriate training and have regular weekly updates to maintain their knowledge of how to keep pupils safe. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders work well with external agencies to get timely support for pupils and families. Safeguarding records are detailed. Pupils learn how to manage some of the risks they might face and feel confident to share concerns with staff. Leaders are aware of local risks to pupils and support families to avoid these.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not use the information from their checks of pupils' knowledge to adapt the curriculum. As a result, sometimes teaching does not help pupils to address misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the information that they have about the gaps in pupils' knowledge to adapt the curriculum.
- Leaders have not identified the component knowledge in some foundation subjects. Some teachers are not clear about the small steps to teach pupils. As a result, pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge they could in some foundation subjects. Leaders should ensure that they clearly identify the component knowledge that pupils should learn.

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

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| Unique reference number | 148138 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 10267781 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 229 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of governing body | Miss Sarah Granger |
| Headteacher | Neil Nottingham |
| Website | www.bluebellmeadowprimary.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 September 2020.
- The school is part of Eden Academy Trust Limited.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school childcare.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 spoke to senior leaders, including members of the local governing body, representatives from the board of trustees and the school improvement partner.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for safeguarding, including looking at the single central record, behaviour logs, and attendance and safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors met the SEND coordinator, spoke to pupils with SEND and reviewed plans to support these pupils. They visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision to check safeguarding arrangements and discuss the learning with children and leaders.
- Inspectors observed behaviour at the start of the day, at lunchtimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors analysed the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and its staff survey. They reviewed responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Milligan

His Majesty's Inspector

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