

Inspection of Bishops Castle Primary School

Oak Meadow, Bishops Castle, Shropshire SY9 5PA

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

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	Last inspected under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 on 15 September 2022

The head of school is Katie Froggatt. This school is part of the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andrew Teale, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by William Finn. There is also an executive headteacher, Kate Mather, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive and are happy in this nurturing school. They are kind to each other and have excellent manners. The school rules of 'ready, respectful and safe' are threaded through all aspects of school life. Equality of opportunity and diversity are promoted very well. Pupils learn about and respect other cultures, faiths and beliefs. Pupils feel safe because they know there are many trusted adults they can talk to, including a school counsellor. They understand how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

Leaders have significantly raised the expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils are taught to be confident and resilient learners. They have positive attitudes to their learning and this is reflected in the quality of the work they produce. Pupils are proud of their achievements.

Pupils behave well. Right from when they start school in Reception, children are taught what good behaviour looks like. They are taught to share, take turns and to listen to each other, and they do. Pupils learn to be responsible and independent through taking on a wide range of roles and responsibilities, such as school councillors and reading ambassadors.

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

Leaders have worked quickly and decisively to develop a broad and ambitious curriculum. Learning is carefully sequenced and builds progressively, starting with the early years. The school has carefully identified the essential knowledge it wants pupils to learn and ensures that this is revisited regularly so that pupils remember their learning. 'Sticky knowledge units' have been introduced to give pupils the foundation to new learning or to revise previous learning. For example, all pupils from Reception to Year 6 have an age-appropriate lesson on evolution and inheritance, to introduce them to this concept.

Historically, outcomes at key stage 2 have been lower than national averages. Leaders recognised this and have addressed weaknesses quickly. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in reading and mathematics. Writing has been a focus for the school. The writing curriculum introduces writing skills progressively and gives pupils regular opportunities to practise these skills. This is having a positive impact on the quality of writing across the school.

High-quality training has ensured that staff have strong subject knowledge. However, at times the choice of learning activity does not always support pupils to learn as well as they could. This means pupils do not learn what leaders expect. While leaders have carried out some monitoring of their subjects, they have not fully evaluated the quality of the curriculum.

There is a shared determination from all that pupils will quickly learn to read. Leaders have thought carefully about the books and stories that they want children to read, including in early years. The phonics programme is well taught by expert staff. The books the pupils read are very closely matched to the sounds they are learning. Assessment is used well to ensure pupils who need additional support get opportunities to 'keep up' through quick and regular practise and 'catch up' through more formal interventions.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly and effective support is put in place to help them. Staff receive regular training and are confident in supporting the needs of individual pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school and achieve well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and enjoy learning. This is reflected in pupils' high attendance. Leaders have ensured that pupils learn to be confident and resilient learners. One pupil said, 'Everyone finds things hard. But it helps us learn. We can ask our teacher but they don't just give us the answer. They help us to get it. It's called perseverance.'

There are many opportunities for life beyond the academic. Leaders have thought carefully about trips and experiences that enhance pupils' understanding of the world. For example, pupils attend an outdoor pursuits residential and also stay in a city. In addition, the range of clubs has been carefully considered to match the needs of the pupils, for example a well-being club and a creative writing club.

The work of school and trust leaders to improve the school has been highly effective. In a short space of time, leaders have addressed weaknesses and are building on their many strengths. Staff are proud to work at the school and say that despite the rapid changes, workload has been managed well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the learning activities teachers plan do not precisely match what pupils need to know. This means that pupils remember that task rather than the intended learning. The school should ensure that teachers precisely match the learning task to what pupils need to know and remember.
- While leaders have ensured that their subject curriculum is ambitious, the impact of recent changes have not yet been fully monitored. This means that leaders are not fully clear about the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes in their subjects. Subject leaders should monitor the impact of recent changes to check how well pupils learn the intended curriculum.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	145672
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10290645
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Willian Finn
CEO of the trust	Andrew Teale
Headteacher	Kate Mather
Website	www.bishopscastle-pri.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes. The special educational needs coordinator and early years leader have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss school development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspectors met with representatives of the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust and those responsible for governance.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Dukes

Ofsted Inspector

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