

Inspection of a good school: Bocking Primary School

Church Street, Bocking, Braintree, Essex CM7 5LA

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

The headteacher of this school is Hannah Cagney. This school is part of Attain Academy Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Susannah Edom-Baker, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bruce Doy.

Outcome

Bocking Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at this school. There is a helping hand and a friendly smile for everyone. From the start, in the early years, pupils learn to work together and share their ideas.

Pupils understand that adults have high expectations of their behaviour throughout the day. They appreciate the clear rules and systems in place. Pupils are confident that adults will help them with any worries or concerns. This helps them to feel safe in school.

Pupils know that their teachers want them to do well. They willingly 'have a go' at the tasks presented. In most lessons, they work hard because they understand what they have to do and how to do it. Occasionally, an extra explanation or challenge would help them to achieve even more.

Breaktimes are fun, with plenty for everyone to do. Adults organise games outside so that everyone can join in. Pupils share books inside, relaxing in the cosy reading area together. There is a wide range of clubs available, both during and after the school day, such as choir, football and 'Out and About'. These help pupils to develop their interests and skills.

Pupils are proud to look after their school and each other. Older pupils act as librarians. They take on responsibilities such as house captains and ambassadors.

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

The trust and other leaders have a clear focus on ensuring that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. The school regularly reviews curriculum plans and makes adjustments to improve outcomes for pupils. In most subjects, there are now clear, well-sequenced curriculum plans in place. These set out what pupils need to learn as they move through the school. This helps teachers to understand what pupils have learned before and what they need to know to be ready for their next steps.

Where curriculum plans are put in place well, regular checks on pupils' learning enable teachers to spot where more practice or help is needed. Teachers regularly revisit previous learning. This helps pupils to remember things accurately and fluently. Teachers introduce new learning clearly. They model new strategies in small steps. This gives pupils the confidence to tackle challenges independently and in pairs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right support in lessons. Adults help them to focus and give extra explanations or resources so they can join in with the learning. Overall, this helps pupils to achieve well.

Occasionally, adults do not spot quickly enough where some pupils need another explanation or a challenge. When this happens, the curriculum is not adjusted well enough for all learners, and some pupils achieve less well.

The curriculum for early reading sets out what pupils are to learn in small steps. From the early years, children regularly practise their phonics, using books at the right level. Most pupils quickly learn to read well. The school swiftly spots those pupils who need extra help and puts this in place.

Knowledgeable and experienced subject leaders know how well curriculum plans are being taught. They make regular checks in lessons. They build the expertise of their colleagues with carefully planned support. A few subject leaders are newer to their roles and do not yet have a clear enough understanding of what is working well or needs to be adjusted.

The school places a high priority on regular attendance and good behaviour. The school closely monitors how regularly pupils attend. Staff take swift action to improve this when required. The school works closely with families and external agencies to try to address the causes of poor attendance. For a few pupils, the school recognises that there remains more to do to achieve regular attendance, and plans are in place to continue to address this.

The trust is committed to enriching the cultural experiences of all pupils. Children in the early years learn to play the violin. Older pupils have visited the Royal Opera House and compose their own music. A programme of trips, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum for all pupils. These experiences help pupils to develop an appreciation for the world beyond their school. Pupils show respectful, kind and tolerant attitudes towards others.

Trust leaders and governors carry out their statutory duties responsibly. They know the school well and take the views of staff into account in their decision making. Staff value the development opportunities provided by the trust, such as subject network meetings. They work together as a mutually supportive team. Adults appreciate the support provided to manage and prioritise their workloads at a time of rapid change and improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers are not using their checks of what pupils know and can do to adjust their teaching. When this happens, errors and misconceptions are missed or not addressed rapidly enough. The school should continue to build the expertise of staff to use assessment effectively at all times.
- In some subjects, where subject leaders are newer to their role, their checks on the teaching of the curriculum do not consistently ensure this is as highly effective as in other subjects. As a result, a few adults need more support to ensure that pupils learn the curriculum as well as intended. The school should continue to develop newer subject leaders to ensure that they have the guidance and expertise to carry out all aspects of their role well.

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 predecessor school, Bocking Church Street Primary School, to be good in September 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](#)' 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	148305
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295129
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bruce Doy
CEO of trust	Susannah Edom-Baker
Headteacher	Hannah Cagney
Website	www.bockingstreet.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy as part of the Attain Academy Partnership in January 2021. When the predecessor school, Bocking Church Street Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not use any registered or unregistered providers of alternative education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior staff in the school and the trust, including the headteacher, chair of trustees, chair of governors, and the designated lead for

safeguarding. The inspector also spoke with an external improvement partner of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at some samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector considered responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff survey. The views of pupils were gathered by speaking to pupils over the course of the inspection.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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