

Inspection of Balliol Primary School

Chesters Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 8QP

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Balliol School does not provide pupils with a quality of education that prepares them sufficiently well for their next stage in education. Pupils have significant gaps in their learning. This is due to the inconsistencies in the delivery of the school curriculum.

Following the introduction of a new approach to behaviour management, pupils' behaviour has begun to improve. However, there remain too many instances where learning is disrupted by pupils' loud outbursts and refusal to follow requests. This causes anxiety for some pupils, who dislike the incidents of poor behaviour that they sometimes experience.

Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not have full or equal access to the curriculum. This prevents them from developing the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed.

Pupils participate in different sporting events and visit local places of interest. Some pupils take responsibility for different roles in school, such as looking after the library or being a school councillor. Pupils learn about careers from visitors to school and visits to local workplaces.

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

The school is finding it difficult to address some long-term weaknesses in the teaching of the curriculum. Over time, the quality of education that pupils have received has not been checked well enough. Pupils' performance in external assessments at the end of key stage 2 is weak. The new headteacher is taking measures to improve outcomes for pupils. However, there remains much to do, and the process is made more difficult by frequent changes in staffing. The capacity for the rapid improvement needed is limited.

Although a phonics programme is in place, pupils are not learning to read quickly enough. There is a lack of structure in the teaching of pre-reading skills in Nursery. Children in Reception have few opportunities to rehearse and consolidate their phonics learning. The delivery of the phonics programme is inconsistent, and there is a lack of understanding of gaps in pupils' reading knowledge. Pupils who have fallen behind with their reading do not receive the precise support that they need in order to improve. Pupils' reading knowledge affects their learning across the phases and all curriculum areas.

In mathematics, leaders have a better understanding of gaps in pupils' learning. However, pupils lack basic mathematical knowledge and fluency in number skills. This limits their access to reasoning and problem-solving.

In some subject areas, such as art and computing, staff receive curriculum guidance that better supports their teaching. In these subjects, teachers are clear in their expectations. They teach the subject skills and knowledge step by step. Pupils enjoy

these lessons and experience greater success in these subjects than they do in other subjects.

Some pupils with SEND have highly complex needs. Staff show genuine care and empathy towards all pupils and especially those with SEND. However, the targets that are set for pupils with SEND are often too vague. They predominantly focus on social and emotional needs and pay insufficient attention to academic learning needs. Staff do not have enough guidance and training to support pupils with SEND. Some pupils with SEND spend a large part of the day outside the classroom. They miss out on being with their peer group and on some curriculum learning.

Generally, pupils are polite and respectful towards staff. They look forward to the rewards that they receive for their positive behaviour. However, disruption to lessons still occurs. There is inconsistency in how well behaviour is managed. The school has recently introduced a relationship policy to help promote positive behaviour. This has led to a reduction in the number of physical interventions made by staff. However, the school does not track incidents of poor behaviour well enough. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to determine how well the new behaviour policy is working.

Adults treat children in early years with kindness and help them settle into routines quickly. However, the planned learning is not ambitious enough. Opportunities for rehearsing and embedding important knowledge are not considered with sufficient care. The learning environment does not enable children to experience the seven areas of the early years curriculum well enough. Children are left to their own devices for too long. The activities that they undertake do not support them sufficiently well in building their knowledge.

The wider personal development curriculum builds pupils' understanding about relationships and potential careers. Pupils benefit from some wider experiences, such as through residential visits and school sports clubs. However, these opportunities do not broaden pupils' experiences well enough. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures, major world religions and fundamental British values is not developed well. Consequently, pupils are not being sufficiently well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Partners, such as the local authority, North Tyneside Learning Trust and nearby schools, are supporting leaders to bring about change. However, there is a lack of coherence to this support. This means that the biggest issues with curriculum delivery and oversight are not being resolved. Senior leaders, including the governing body, are overly optimistic in their assessment of the school. Governors' checks on the school's work lack rigour. The school does not have the requisite support or clear strategy to make a rapid and significant difference to the educational experiences for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Minor oversights were corrected on the single central record during the inspection.

Some members of support staff who work at the school but are employed by a contractor have not received the most recent whole-school safeguarding training. Leaders have plans to address this. This delay has not left the pupils at risk of harm. These staff have attended numerous training events over recent years and have a keen understanding of school procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge of phonics, reading and mathematics. This means that they are not prepared well enough for their next stage in education. The school should ensure that there is a clear understanding of the gaps in pupils' learning. The school should take action to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in these subjects.
- The targets set for pupils with SEND are not clear, and teachers receive insufficient guidance on how to meet pupils' needs. The school should ensure that the plans for all pupils with SEND include clear targets that will enable them to make progress across the curriculum. The school should also provide staff with better guidance on how to support pupils with SEND.
- The school does not manage behaviour consistently well. Learning is disrupted by the poor behaviour of some pupils, and this results in other pupils feeling anxious. The school must ensure that staff are better trained to manage behaviour consistently well. The school should also track patterns of poor behaviour more closely.
- In early years, the school does not use the learning environment and curriculum time effectively. As a result, children do not have opportunities to learn as much as they could. The school should support staff to deliver the curriculum well and better use the learning environment, providing a firm foundation for children's subsequent learning.
- The current curriculum, including the wider opportunities the school provides, does not develop pupils' understanding of British values and other cultures, faiths and religions well. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders must ensure that this aspect of the school's curriculum is developed effectively.
- Some staff members were not included in the most recent safeguarding training. They are not aware of the recent changes to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Although inspectors were satisfied that this omission has not left pupils at risk of harm, leaders should ensure that all members of staff are consistently included in all relevant safeguarding training.
- Leaders, including the governing body, have not been rigorous enough in their appraisal of the curriculum, provision for pupils with SEND or the standards of behaviour. Improvements are not being made quickly enough. The school needs

to support leaders and staff with the expertise and capacity needed to bring about rapid improvements needed in the quality of education.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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	108603
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10289979
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lee Massingham
Headteacher	Victoria Mellor
Website	www.balliolprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing since the previous inspection. The headteacher commenced employment in September 2021.
- The school is a member of North Tyneside Learning Trust. This is a collaboration of schools working in partnership.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils.
- 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.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with early career teachers and some support staff.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority and representatives of members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, art and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at pupils' books and samples of their work.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- 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.
- As well as speaking to parents and carers at the school gate, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors took the views of staff into account through a number of meetings, as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janet Madden

Ofsted Inspector

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