

# Inspection of Francis Baily Primary School

Skillman Drive, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 4GG

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

The headteacher of this school is Yvonne Standing. This school is part of The Kennet Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gemma Piper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike Cole.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school has high expectations for pupils, but these are not consistently met because pupils cannot read confidently. Reading is not sufficiently prioritised. Pupils who struggle with reading do not get the expert help they need to catch up. This prevents them from achieving as well as they could across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They are safe and well cared for, saying their teachers help them if they have any worries. Pupils are proud to make a positive difference to the school through their roles as librarians, digital leaders, and house captains. There is a wide variety of clubs for pupils to join during and after the school day. Parents comment that 'there are lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests, in particular through the sporting opportunities offered'.

Pupils are taught to be 'ready, safe and respectful'. They behave well in lessons and throughout the school. Recent training has helped staff to better understand and implement the expectations for pupils' behaviour. Standards of behaviour have improved as a result. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and address any instances of low-level disruption quickly, so learning is not interrupted.

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

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the school recognised that many pupils could not read fluently because they had gaps in their phonics knowledge. Consequently, the school's approach to teaching phonics systematically has been improved. However, not all adults have had the training they need to become expert teachers of reading. This means that gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge have not closed quickly. Reading is not sufficiently prioritised when children join the Reception Year. As a result, when they move on to key stage 1, they are switched off to reading and cannot access the wider curriculum well enough. Recent work with the trust has begun to enhance the reading curriculum, such as through the introduction of high-quality texts. However, these strategies are not helping those who most need help to become confident readers.

Assessment routines across the school help adults to check what pupils have learned. Teachers revisit previous learning in most subjects, but the most important things pupils need to understand are often not included. As a result, pupils have gaps in their understanding and struggle to recall and connect what they have learned before.

Children in Reception are well cared for by adults, with whom they have warm and respectful relationships. The Reception environment is well set up for pupils to develop agility, balance and coordination as they navigate the trim trail and explore the outdoor area. However, children in Reception do not develop language as well as they should. Adults do not engage children in discussions focused on learning that enable them to develop language and expand their vocabulary. This, combined with the lack of rigour and consistency in early reading, means that pupils, including

those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not ready for the curriculum in key stage 1.

The school has developed a broad curriculum. It is ordered logically and identifies the core knowledge and skills that pupils must understand and learn. The school is ambitious that pupils with SEND will follow the same curriculum as their peers. Currently, pupils are not following this broad curriculum as well as leaders would want because teaching does not build closely enough on what pupils have learned so far.

Pupils learn the school values of courage, resilience, collaboration, respect, aspiration, and curiosity. They are recognised for demonstrating these values in weekly 'star assemblies', which pupils look forward to. Pupils learn about the importance of being tolerant in diverse, modern Britain. They develop an understanding of different faiths through their visits to places of worship. Pupils know how to report anything that concerns them on the internet, and they know that they must not share personal information or images with anyone.

The board of trustees and local governing body are aware that pupils are not achieving as well as they should. They are determined that pupils will have a great start to their education. The trust knows what must be done to achieve this vision and has plans in place to make the improvements needed. Trustees understand their statutory duties and ensure they are enacted.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Reading is not taught consistently well. Consequently, pupils struggle to become fluent readers, as they do not know how to blend sounds to read words. The school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and training to become expert and confident teachers of reading.
- Teaching does not routinely focus on the most important content pupils need to understand and remember. As a result, pupils cannot remember what they have learned, and those with gaps in their learning do not catch up quickly. The school should ensure that the information gathered from assessments is used consistently well to identify what pupils know and what they need to learn next so that their knowledge builds securely over time.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147273
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296534
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	551
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Mike Cole
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yvonne Standing
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.francisbaily.co.uk">http://www.francisbaily.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Kennet Academies Trust in September 2019.
- The school currently uses registered alternative provision for some of its pupils.

## 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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, physical education, history and music. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also spoke with leaders about the work the school is doing to improve pupils' attendance.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the deputy headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust, the local governing body and trustees.
- Views of pupils and staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of local governing body and trust board meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour, and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Deirdre Crutchley	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Rixson	Ofsted Inspector

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