

Inspection of an outstanding school: Berkswich CofE (VC) Primary School

Cedar Way, Walton-on-the-Hill, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 0LU

Inspection dates:

30 and 31 January 2024

Outcome

Berkswich CofE (VC) Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn exceptionally well at Berkswich CofE Primary School. All pupils are well cared for and nurtured by dedicated staff. Pupils say that they are very happy and safe here.

The school has set high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. All pupils are well supported and challenged to reach their full potential. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given the right support at the right time. This helps to prepare pupils extremely well for their next stages of education.

Behaviour is exemplary. Leaders pay serious attention to teaching pupils to behave well. Pupils are explicitly taught good manners, such as holding doors open for adults and for each other. Relationships across the school are highly respectful.

The school's core values include being compassionate, inclusive, respectful, responsible and a team player. Every member of the school community exemplifies these values. Everyone is welcomed and celebrated here. Pupils have a strong understanding of different faiths and cultures.

The school gives pupils a wide range of experiences. These support pupils both academically and in their wider personal development. For example, pupils are taught to use a defibrillator and perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). All of this prepares pupils well to be positive members of society.

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

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These high expectations begin in the early years. Furthermore, the curriculum is highly effective in meeting pupils' needs. Every potential barrier to learning for pupils is understood and catered for. Staff regularly review curriculum subject areas. As part of this work, leaders carefully consider what pupils need to know and the order in which pupils need to learn it. Adults make sure

that any gaps in learning are quickly picked up. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEND, learn exceptionally well in all subjects.

In lessons, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They deliver lessons clearly. Pupils successfully build on their prior knowledge. For example, in history, pupils use their previous knowledge of amphitheatres in ancient Greece when comparing theatres in Tudor times. In addition, pupils can make connections between topics because of their secure subject knowledge. In the early years, the indoor and outdoor environments are of high quality. They support pupils' learning effectively.

Reading is given the highest priority. The school has created a community of 'reading ambassadors' who actively promote a love of reading. These ambassadors include staff, pupils and volunteers from the local community. Pupils talk about books and reading with enthusiasm. They take pride in their school library and speak excitedly about their favourite books. Furthermore, pupils are taught to read well. Staff are highly trained in delivering the school's phonics programme and they take swift and effective action to support any pupils needing additional help.

Behaviour in classrooms and around school is exceptional. In lessons, pupils are highly engaged and motivated. At playtime, older pupils teach younger pupils how to engage in traditional playground games. A tuck shop gives pupils the opportunity to handle money and work out their change. All adults model clear expectations of behaviour and lead by example. Adults purposefully model courteous behaviours to each other in front of pupils. These positive interactions teach pupils how to behave respectfully and politely.

Pupils' personal development is of the highest quality. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities. These are planned in a deliberate and well-thought-out way. The school supports individual pupils with their own broader development needs, such as building their confidence or help with public speaking. Pupils experience additional specialist support in music and sports. Pupils' mental health is taken very seriously. Dedicated, trained staff are available to pupils. Pupils seek them out and discuss their worries and concerns. Pupils say they find this extremely helpful.

All staff have high expectations of themselves and of each other. They are extremely well supported by school leaders and governors. Workload, well-being and career professional development is taken very seriously here. This means that staff become highly skilled very quickly. Governors and leaders know that creating a secure workplace will have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the provision in place for their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 school to be outstanding in June 2017.

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	124234
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290564
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Cope
Headteacher	Samantha Jackson
Website	www.berkswichceprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a before- and after-school provision on site.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Lichfield.
- A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Berkswich CofE (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school took place on 7 March 2019.

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 the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the governing body, two other governors, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. The inspector also talked informally with parents.
- The inspector spoke with a school improvement adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, history and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at additional subjects, including art and design, modern foreign languages and music.
- The inspector looked at a sample of pupils' education, health and care plans.
- The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils, formally and informally, about their learning and experiences at school.
- The inspector observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- 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 questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also looked at responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents and SEND records.

Inspection team

Anna Vrahimi, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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