

Inspection of Buildwas Academy

Buildwas Road, Buildwas, Telford, Shropshire TF8 7DA

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Jason Millington. This school is part of Mighty Oaks 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, Paul Doddridge, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Keith Hall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Following a period of decline in pupils' outcomes, new leaders have raised the expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils are beginning to benefit from positive changes happening at Buildwas Academy. Gaps in pupils' knowledge are now being addressed across the school. Pupils are rising to these higher expectations.

Positive relationships between pupils and staff are very important here. Pupils speak highly of the adults and show great respect towards them. Any unkind behaviour, such as bullying, is dealt with quickly and sensitively. Pupils share their worries with named adults. As a result, pupils say they feel happy and safe.

Pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities. Older pupils, for instance, oversee the 'friendship bench' at playtimes. They help pupils make friends with each other. Pupils experience a range of extra-curricular activities, such as residential trips and some after-school clubs. Leaders have plans in place to increase and broaden this offer further.

Pupils facing personal difficulties are well supported by the whole school community. This demonstrates their motto, 'A small school with a huge heart'.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes. New leaders, including new trustees and governors, swiftly identified that standards in pupils' education were in decline. New curriculum plans were quickly put in place and gaps in pupils' knowledge were identified. This work is starting to make a positive difference, particularly in the early years.

In mathematics and English, particularly in writing, there is variation across the school in pupils' outcomes. This is because, over time, gaps in pupils' knowledge have not been addressed and pupils have fallen behind in their learning. Staff now deliver the curriculum well. In addition, new assessment systems help staff to identify what pupils know and where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils also receive targeted additional support. Subsequently, pupils are beginning to catch up in their learning.

In lessons, staff present learning clearly. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and views. There are high expectations for pupils to use accurate subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils revisit prior learning regularly during lessons. This is helping them to remember what they have previously learned. There are some adaptations made during lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, the precise barriers to some pupils' learning are not always well understood by staff. The planned support in place is too broad and not specific enough. This includes for pupils who may need additional support for their

behaviour during lessons. This means that some pupils are not consistently receiving the support they need to achieve as well as they could.

Many subject areas, such as history, have only been implemented recently. Pupils are enthused about the changes. They have opportunities to learn about subjects more regularly and in a variety of ways. For example, actors visited the school to bring to life their learning about Romans and Vikings. However, leaders understand that it is too early to know if the newly implemented foundation subjects are having the desired impact on pupils' learning over time.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of early reading and phonics. Phonics begins from the very start. All staff receive appropriate training to deliver phonics. Most staff teach this accurately. Pupils who are falling behind receive additional support. Pupils enjoy reading and engage well with books. They have many opportunities throughout the day to read and listen to stories.

In the early years, the curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. Children's knowledge builds from Nursery and into Reception. In lessons, planned learning activities identify the important knowledge staff want children to learn, most of the time. Routines are well established. Pupils achieve well in the early years.

There are some processes in place to help identify and review the needs of pupils with SEND. However, the systems lack sufficient rigour. This means that some pupils do not get the right help they need to achieve well quickly enough.

Behaviour in classrooms and across school is calm. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils particularly enjoy outdoor playtime. They experience a wide range of exciting activities, such as making dens with rope and material. Although a number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough, leaders have secured improvements in this area.

Pupils know about different cultures and religions. They celebrate and welcome differences. Pupils say that everyone is welcome at their school. They have a secure knowledge of the fundamental British values. This means that pupils know how to be respectful citizens in modern-day Britain.

Subject leaders have driven curriculum improvements across the school. They are well supported by trust leaders and governors. Staff are supportive of the many changes. They receive appropriate development opportunities to continue improving outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In mathematics and English, gaps in pupils' knowledge have developed over time. Pupils are beginning to catch up. However, in different areas of the school there is variation in pupils' achievement where pupils have fallen behind in the past. The school should continue its work on strengthening the curriculum and identifying and addressing the gaps in pupils' learning, so that pupils achieve well across the curriculum.
- Many foundation subjects have only been implemented recently. Leaders do not yet know the impact of the newly implemented curriculum on pupils' learning over time. The school should continue its plans to embed the new curriculum and ensure it has the desired impact on pupils' knowledge.
- The processes to identify and review the needs of pupils with SEND are not sufficiently rigorous. This means that some pupils do not get the help they need to achieve well quickly enough. The school should review its procedures for identifying and reviewing the needs of pupils with SEND to ensure that they receive timely and effective support to help them succeed.
- The support planned to meet the specific needs of some pupils is too broad and not specific enough. This means that some pupils are not consistently receiving the support they need to achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff develop the expertise to understand the specific barriers to pupils' learning and accurately put in place the support needed for these pupils.

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	142575
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10322885
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Keith Hall
CEO of the trust	Paul Doddridge
Headteacher	Jason Millington
Website	www.buildwasacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Mighty Oaks Academy Trust, which consists of two schools.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to leadership and staffing. The headteacher was appointed in September 2023. The chief executive officer (CEO) was also appointed in September 2023. The chair of the local academy committee started in October 2023. A number of trustees and local academy committee members are also new. All teaching staff are new since the last inspection.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are organised into four mixed-age classes.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school provision on site.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- ☒ The inspectors met with the headteacher, the CEO, the chair of the trust, trustees, the chair of the local academy committee, additional trustees, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with parents and carers.
- ☒ The lead inspector met with an external school improvement partner.
- ☒ Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 lead inspector also looked at additional subjects, including computing and design and technology.
- ☒ Inspectors looked at a sample of individual education plans for pupils with SEND.
- ☒ The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- ☒ Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, formally and informally, about their learning and experiences at school.
- ☒ Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- ☒ 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.
- ☒ Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. Inspectors also looked at responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- ☒ Inspectors 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

Martin Pye

Ofsted Inspector

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