

Inspection of Battledown Centre for Children and Families

Harp Hill, Battledown, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 6PZ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected

The headteacher of this school is Nikki Teague. This school is part of the SAND Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Martin Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Antonia Noble.

What is it like to attend this school?

Battledown Centre for Children and Families is a school where the child is at the heart of every decision that is made. Staff care deeply for the pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are special. They know and understand each pupil's unique needs. As a result, pupils are happy and safe.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class and during social times. Pupils are keen to learn and make strong progress from their different starting points. However, the school is aware that, at times as the cohorts change, the academic curriculum is not challenging enough for some pupils.

The provision for pupils' wider personal development is strong. Pupils take pleasure in the rich opportunities on offer, such as riding for the disabled and trips on the Willow boat. These activities increase pupils' confidence and sense of well-being.

Developing pupils' independence is threaded throughout the school day. For example, the installation of a working pelican crossing in the playground teaches pupils how to cross the road safely.

The school provides significant pastoral support to pupils and their families. Parents are delighted with the school and appreciate all they do.

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

The school's aim to 'remove obstacles and enable learning for all our pupils' shines through. Everything the school does is about helping pupils to realise their potential. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to do their best. They display positive attitudes towards their learning and strive to overcome the challenges they face. Staff know each pupil exceptionally well. This knowledge enables them to identify and intervene quickly if pupils show signs of anxiety or stress.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to receive a high-quality education. School leaders value the work of the trust that supports them in driving forward identified improvements. This means the curriculum is well planned and bespoke to the needs of the pupil, which is linked closely to their education, health and care plans. For example, in reading and mathematics, planning for how pupils will learn the key vocabulary is clear. Staff revisit previous learning to help the most important knowledge stick in pupils' memory. However, the school knows that for those pupils who are increasingly able to learn a more academic curriculum extra work is needed to ensure these pupils achieve the best outcomes.

The joy of books permeates the school. Pupils have rich experiences of story time. These sessions meet pupils' sensory needs well. Staff deliver the phonics programme with precision. As a result, pupils are beginning to read with accuracy and confidence.

The therapeutic approaches used by the school are a crucial element of the school's work. For example, occupational, music, play and speech therapies are used successfully to aid pupils' well-being and academic development. Olaf, the therapy dog, is a favourite visitor to the school and helps pupils to relax and aids their ability to communicate their feelings.

Pupils' wider social development is integral to the school's work. The school plans and sequences the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) with care. Pupils build knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy and lead safe, active lives. For example, pupils choose fruit to eat and not sweets. However, the school is mindful that the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is underdeveloped. This means that pupils do not acquire important knowledge to manage their personal and social lives well. The school has plans to strengthen this, but these are in the early stages of implementation.

Improving attendance, especially reducing persistent absence, has been a priority of the school since the pandemic. The school has secure and effective systems in place to ensure that pupils attend regularly. As a result, pupils attend well.

Pupils relish the opportunity to experience a range of activities, such as sensory dance, trampolining, working in the allotment and visits in the community. Pupils take their roles as school councillors seriously. They welcome the changes made to the school as a result of their suggestions, such as new outdoor equipment. These responsibilities help to build pupils skills, including resilience, leadership and self-esteem.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The RSE curriculum is in the early stages of implementation. This means that pupils do not have a deep enough understanding of important subject-specific knowledge. The trust and school must ensure that this work is fully in place so that the curriculum prepares pupils well for future learning.
- Pupils capable of following a more academic curriculum do not have sufficient opportunity to do so. As a result, their progress may be hindered. The trust and school must ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of 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	147562
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10322325
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	four to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Antonia Noble
CEO of trust	Martin Hughes
Headteacher	Nikki Teague
Website	www.battledown.sandmat.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Battledown Centre for Children and Families cater for pupils with a range of severe and complex learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Battledown Centre for Children and Families converted to be an academy in April 2020. When its predecessor school, Battledown Centre for Children and Families, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and the trust's director of education.
- The lead inspector spoke with trustees and members of the local advisory board.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school improvement partner for the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspectors 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 lead inspector listened to pupils across the school read to an adult. The lead inspector visited story sessions.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including school development plans and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The inspectors met with school leaders to discuss and scrutinise how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey, and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Simons

Ofsted Inspector

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