

Inspection of The Bellbird Primary School

Link Road, Sawston, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB22 3GB

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at The Bellbird enjoy the subjects they study. They particularly enjoy learning about famous musicians or how to play musical instruments. The school has raised its expectations for what pupils can achieve. Being independent and working hard during lessons helps pupils to achieve well. The chance to represent the school in English and mathematics competitions inspires pupils to try their best.

Lunchtime is an enjoyable part of the day. Pupils of different age groups mix well together on the playground and in the dining hall. Year 6 pupils eagerly volunteer to run clubs for younger pupils, such as singing or arts and crafts. They value their role as 'buddies' for children in the Reception Year. Democratically elected school councillors are proud of what they do. They love to see the equipment they have ordered used by their peers. This all helps pupils to learn how to be responsible and reliable.

The curriculum teaches pupils about differences in the world. There are respectful relationships throughout the school. Pupils are proud of being different. They know their differences will be celebrated as this is a school where 'we are all different but all the same'.

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

The school has made recent improvements to the curriculum. It has broken down, and sequenced, important content into smaller building blocks of knowledge. Staff teach this well. This helps pupils to secure their understanding over time. For example, in mathematics, pupils become increasingly adept in their use of number. This helps them to solve more complex mathematical problems.

Staff present information clearly to pupils. Typically, they check how well pupils learn through well-considered questions. For example, in the Reception Year, teachers probe children's understanding of language effectively. This helps children to develop and improve their vocabulary. In some subjects, the way staff check pupils' understanding lacks precision. Here, the school does not have a secure enough understanding of some of the pupils' gaps in knowledge. This can lead to some pupils not doing as well as they should in some subjects.

Pupils achieve well in most of their end of key stage 2 tests. However, they do not achieve as well in writing. The school has rightly made improvements to the English curriculum. Now, pupils have well-considered opportunities to write for different purposes. Pupils enjoy writing and often write with flair. They use interesting language to make their writing engaging. Pupils understand many of the technical aspects of writing related to grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, some pupils struggle to apply this understanding when writing independently. When pupils make common writing errors, staff do not identify and address these quickly enough. This means that some misconceptions persist.

Pupils enjoy reading. Children in the Reception Year quickly learn to blend sounds together to read new words. The school provides pupils with books that match the sounds they know and can read. This helps pupils to read with fluency and confidence. Well-trained staff effectively support those pupils who find reading difficult. This helps them to improve their reading.

The school precisely identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained to support pupils with SEND. They use the information the school provides them to help pupils with SEND access their learning. Careful adaptations, such as specific interventions to help pupils learn to manage their emotions, are successful.

Children in the Reception Year settle quickly into the life of the school. They soon understand the routines and expectations of behaviour. Pupils across the school behave well. They show kindness and compassion towards each other. They enjoy attending school and do so regularly. The school effectively supports families to remove barriers that may prevent their child from attending school. They have much success with this work.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum teaches pupils how to lead healthy lives. Pupils understand the dangers of substance abuse such as smoking. They know the importance of making and maintaining healthy relationships. The shared, caring ethos of the school helps pupils to understand their feelings. Pupils have been taught how to use their 'CHUM CATS' system if they fall out with each other. They are adept at solving any disagreements they may have.

Governors provide support and challenge. They ensure leaders help staff to manage their workload and well-being. Leaders have carefully balanced making the required improvements to the curriculum with supporting staff. A focus on training staff to teach subjects with new schemes has helped staff to feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school does not routinely know how well pupils have learned important content or where they have gaps in their knowledge. This makes it hard for teachers to adapt their teaching to fill these gaps. The school should ensure that in all subjects, they identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge so that teaching can be adapted accordingly.
- Staff do not address as quickly as they could pupils' errors in grammar, punctuation or spelling when writing independently. This leads to pupils making the same common errors. As a result, pupils do not write as well as they could.

The school should ensure staff quickly identify and address where pupils misunderstand and make errors in their writing.

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 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	135132
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345289
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tim Wreghitt
Headteacher	Emma Clayton (co-headteacher) Rebecca Pentney (co-headteacher)
Website	www.thebellbird.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has two co-headteachers. One joined in September 2020 and one joined in April 2023.
- The school currently uses two unregistered providers of alternative provision.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and English, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the

curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.

- Inspectors considered evidence from other subjects through meeting with subject leaders, reviewing evidence of work and meeting with pupils.
- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers, deputy headteacher, special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, key stage leaders, subject leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, bullying records, attendance records, pupil records, minutes of governing body meetings, school development plans, records of monitoring from the governing body and local authority and school policies.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with parents as they arrived at school.
- Inspectors considered responses to both the staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors also met with pupils and staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matt O'Grady	Ofsted Inspector
Ania Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector

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