

# Inspection of Botley School

Elms Road, Botley, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 9JZ

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

The headteacher of this school is Josephine Reid. This school is part of Acer Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nathan Thomas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jill Cottee.

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

This is a rapidly improving school. Recent work to improve the curriculum, supported by the trust, is having a positive impact. However, the quality of teaching in essential areas, such as reading, writing, and mathematics, still needs to improve as reflected in the published low outcomes for pupils.

Positive relationships between pupils and staff are very important here. Staff often go to great lengths to support pupils and their families. Pupils speak highly of the adults and show great respect towards them. Any unkind behaviour, such as bullying, is dealt with quickly and sensitively. As a result, pupils are happy at this welcoming school, where differences between people are valued and nurtured. They feel safe and have confidence in staff to address any concerns on the rare occasions this is needed.

Personal development is a particular strength of the school's offer. The school's values of inclusivity, teamwork, kindness, respect, resilience, and creativity run through everything it does. Pupils are taught how to work and play together nicely. They behave well and take pride in their work. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop talents and interests. They are also encouraged to take on positions of responsibility to support their school community.

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

This school is well led. Decisive leadership within the school and unwavering support from the trust have brought stability. Staff and those responsible for governance are united around a shared vision and are working together effectively to drive improvements. As a result, the school environment is calm, purposeful, and welcoming to all. A well-thought-out curriculum is in place. This is ambitious and sets out the essential knowledge pupils should learn from early years to the end of key stage 2. However, despite these significant improvements, the quality of education is not yet good enough.

The curriculum is not taught consistently well. Despite evidence of strong leadership across many aspects of the provision on offer, the school has not yet carefully checked or evaluated the delivery of the curriculum with enough rigour. This means that, at times, weaknesses in how well some staff deliver the curriculum, including in writing, mathematics and phonics, are not identified or addressed. This includes pupils' misconceptions in mathematics and basic spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors in their writing. Over time, this has meant pupils have gaps in their knowledge, and are not achieving as well as they could. This is reflected in the results of 2023 national tests. Conversely, in some subjects in the wider curriculum, teaching is better and enables the pupils to achieve well. Leaders know that they need to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in order to improve how well pupils learn across the curriculum.

The school's phonics programme is not delivered consistently well. Not all staff have had the training they need to deliver it confidently and with expertise. This can mean that the weakest readers do not always get the support they need, and children do not always read books that are well matched to their level of learning. As a result, some pupils do not get the support and practise they need to become fluent readers as quickly as they could.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Teachers have clear plans to help them meet their pupils' needs and implement a range of strategies to help pupils access the curriculum.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the pastoral care on offer is a strength. Many pupils show positive attitudes to their learning, including in social situations. When pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour, staff take effective and supportive action to enable pupils to re-engage in their learning.

In the early years, the curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced, to ensure children's knowledge builds from Nursery and into Reception. Activities are well planned by knowledgeable staff and learning is engaging and purposeful. The environment is rich with opportunities for children to deepen their understanding of the curriculum. The high expectations of staff ensure routines are well established, meaning children know what is expected of them each day.

The personal development curriculum is a strength. Pupils can confidently talk about different cultures and religions. They celebrate and welcome each other's views and beliefs and have a secure knowledge of fundamental British values. The school goes the extra mile to ensure all pupils can access and benefit from various opportunities to develop different talents and interests. Pupil leadership opportunities allow them to develop important life skills and enable them to contribute actively to their schooling.

Local governors and trustees know the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide particularly effective support and challenge to the school. Close regard is paid to the impact of improvements on staff workload and well-being. As a result, staff feel valued and supported in their roles.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Although curriculum planning is now secure, the teaching of the curriculum is inconsistent. This means that the quality of pupils' learning in different subjects varies, so they do not reach their full potential. The school should build on and

strengthen the implementation of the curriculum so that gaps in pupils' learning are closed and their outcomes continue to improve in all subjects.

- In many subjects, the school is not yet effective in evaluating the delivery and impact of the curriculum. This means that some weaknesses are not identified and acted on in a timely manner. This hinders pupils' achievement in these subjects. The school should ensure that it has the processes and actions in place to further improve the quality of education.
- The school has not provided some staff with the training they need to expertly support pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read. As a result, these pupils do not consistently benefit from the high-quality teaching that they need to rapidly become fluent readers. The school should ensure that all staff supporting the phonics programme have the skills and expertise they need to deliver the phonics programme effectively and with confidence.

## 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>	147759
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322050
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jill Cottee
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Nathan Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Josephine Reid
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.botleyschool.org.uk">www.botleyschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school became an academy, joining Acer Academy Trust in March 2020. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2019, it was judged inadequate overall.
- There have been several changes to staffing. The headteacher has been in post since September 2020.
- The school is smaller than its predecessor school and has changed from two to one form entry.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 considered that in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors met and spoke with school leaders, staff, pupils, parents, representatives of those responsible for governance and the CEO of the trust.
- The inspection team conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics, religious education and design technology. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers, and pupils, visited lessons, and looked at samples of pupils’ work. The inspectors also met with leaders to discuss curriculum thinking in writing and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors considered 80 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and the views of pupils gathered throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, considered 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 information about pupils’ attendance, behaviour and wider learning.

## Inspection team

James Stuart, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Baljit Bhabra	His Majesty’s Inspector
Richard Blackmore	Ofsted Inspector

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