

Inspection of Bournehall Primary School

Bournehall Avenue, Bushey, Hertfordshire WD23 3AX

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since November 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The well-planned transition arrangements mean children start the Reception Year feeling ready for their school journey. Pupils benefit from having staff who have high expectations and want the best for them. The care and attention pupils receive puts them in the right frame of mind to learn the school's interesting curriculum. They achieve well by the end of Year 6.

Pupils typically behave and socialise well. Younger pupils are proud to show the stickers they earn for their efforts. Older pupils enjoy taking on roles. For example, the school ambassadors show visitors around the school, while the library monitors help to organise the books.

The physical education programme, including clubs, teaches pupils to value exercise and sport. Pupils learn how to take part in team sports, including basketball, football and netball. Pupils feel proud of their efforts, no matter who wins.

The school's 'news and views' programme encourages pupils to share their thoughts. Staff support older pupils in leading discussions, which include younger pupils. Pupils share ideas for improving the school, such as suggesting extra-curricular clubs. When they see their ideas become reality, pupils feel valued. Knowing that staff listen to them makes pupils feel safe and comfortable sharing any worries.

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

During the pandemic, leadership challenges affected staff morale and slowed the school's development. However, the local authority and governing body collaborated to improve the situation. New leaders motivated staff by involving them in changes, such as discussing the adoption of high-quality schemes of work or collaborating with experts to shape the early years curriculum. This helped staff to understand key concepts and skills for each subject or area of learning in the early years. Staff also value support systems, such as privately engaged speech and language services that create vocabulary lists with simple definitions and pictures. These aid pupils' understanding of new concepts and words.

Staff training needs are primarily based on self-reports about what staff feel they require. While this approach provides some helpful tailored support, it overlooks gaps in subject knowledge or teaching methods that staff are unaware of. Additionally, the school does not always check how well training is being applied in the classroom. As a result, there are times when the explanations and instructions pupils receive lack the clarity necessary for them to understand new concepts and skills. For example, weaker readers may receive prompts that are unhelpful because they do not align with the requirements of the phonics programme.

The school makes commendable efforts to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have decided to allocate school finances to engage private support services as a short-term measure. These services

include effective counselling and guidance from educational psychologists. These external experts help staff to meet the needs of a growing proportion of pupils with SEND. The school also collaborates with special schools in the area to access expertise and assessments that help to identify pupils' needs as early as possible. Staff typically set clear, specific targets for pupils with SEND and plan activities that help pupils work towards achieving these targets. However, in some cases, the link between the targets and the activities could be stronger, limiting opportunities for pupils to practise and progress as effectively as possible.

The school elected to adopt a therapeutic approach to managing pupils' behaviour and, overall, it is working effectively. As pupils grow, they develop the self-control and social skills needed to manage their feelings and resolve minor disputes. The school provides effective pastoral support. Parents and carers appreciate how the school maintains open and honest relationships with them, addressing concerns directly. This approach extends to attendance arrangements. The school's clear and proactive strategy has resulted in pupils' attendance being significantly higher than the national average.

The school offers a robust personal development programme. This includes a wide range of extra-curricular clubs that allow pupils to explore their talents and interests. Residential trips enhance this programme by fostering a connection with the outdoors and promoting independence in preparation for secondary school. The carefully considered personal, social, health and economic curriculum ensures that pupils learn about healthy relationships, equipping them with essential life skills.

Leaders, including governors, bring expertise and experience to their statutory duties, ensuring the education benefits all pupils. Their strong financial oversight keeps the school well-staffed and resourced, contributing to success in statutory assessments. Ongoing works maintain the building and facilities, creating a welcoming learning environment. Proactive governors enable leaders to engage more effectively with the school community. Parents appreciate this, often praising the school's warm and supportive atmosphere.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Support for the few pupils who need to improve their reading and phonics skills lacks rigour. Consequently, it takes longer for them to catch up. The school should ensure staff use consistent and effective strategies for helping pupils improve their phonics and monitor the impact of these strategies so that pupils who need to catch up, do so.
- Leaders are in the process of embedding their expectations of how the curriculum and support for pupils with SEND should be delivered. Because of this, there are occasions

when pupils' learning experiences do not link with their targets or help them to make as much progress as they could. The school should strengthen its oversight of curriculum implementation and provide support to staff as needed, ensuring lessons are effective in every year group.

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	117296
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345190
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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Diana Brown
Headteacher	Steven Wells
Website	www.bournehallprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the substantive role in October 2023.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, five governors, a representative from the Hertfordshire virtual school and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and held discussions with some pupils about their learning. They also reviewed samples of pupils' work and listened to a selection of pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- An inspector also met with leaders to discuss the development and implementation of the curriculums in science and religious education.
- 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 also reviewed school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and reports from reviews of the school conducted by the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the surveys, including Ofsted's pupil survey, staff survey, and responses to Ofsted Parent View, which included free-text responses.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ann Bowen-Breslin

Ofsted Inspector

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