

Inspection of Bassingbourn Primary School

Brook Road, Bassingbourn, Brook Road, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5NP

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Bassingbourn Primary School is a safe place. Pupils like school. They benefit from positive working relationships with caring and committed staff.

Pupils learn an ambitious curriculum. However, this is new. Some pupils successfully build up their knowledge. Yet low expectations in the past have left others struggling. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. That said, the school is seeing improvements. Children in Reception do really well. There is a positive culture of reading. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they read from the school library.

Behaviour is variable. Classrooms are mostly orderly. However, some pupils lose focus too easily. Distracting or off-task behaviour frustrates those who want to learn. Some pupils use unkind language. Staff tend to address this, however, sometimes it persists.

Pupils enjoy many opportunities that promote their personal development. They praise annual trips to places like Woburn Safari Park. At lunchtimes, pupils engage well with the wide-ranging activities on offer. For example, the curling club helps pupils who do not like sport to participate. While this is the case, the school does not help pupils develop positive character as well as it intends. Some struggle to embody its values fully. This is in traits such as respect, excellence and resilience.

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

Leaders have rapidly improved the school in the last year. The school has developed new and positive relationships with parents and the wider community. The current leadership has rebuilt this provision. Aspects such as safeguarding, attendance and the early years are in a much better place. The school knows that key areas still need more work.

The school recognises that pupils have not received the quality of education they deserve. It has reviewed and replaced the curriculum. This is now broad and well considered. The school assessed that pupils had significant gaps in their learning. In response, it is reteaching the building blocks of knowledge across all year groups. This is particularly in writing. In consequence, pupils have more secure foundations. They develop and build on what they already know. For example, pupils learn adjectives in Year 1 and use expanded noun phrases well in Year 4.

The curriculum delivery is inconsistent. At times, pupils are taught to use their prior learning well. For instance, they remember number facts and this helps them make mathematical calculations. Yet staff have not had all the training they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. At times, new content is not modelled clearly. Activities set are not well-considered enough to help pupils meet the learning aims. Pupils' understanding is not always checked well and so knowledge gaps are not addressed. These issues mean pupils do not routinely make successful progress through the curriculum.

The early reading curriculum is effective. Pupils quickly learn to read with confidence and fluency. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils know their sounds and blend these well into words. The books they read match the sounds they know. They enjoy and take pride in their reading.

The school has revised its support for pupils with SEND. It ensures it identifies needs accurately through robust processes. The school plans carefully what support pupils with SEND need to access learning. However, sometimes teachers are not confident in putting this support in place. This means that some of these pupils do not understand and engage with their learning as securely as they could.

There are high standards in the early years. Clear routines help children concentrate during classroom learning. They practise their learning effectively through play. For example, they build their fine motor skills in well-planned activities. Adults know these young children very well. They are skilful at using conversations to develop children's vocabulary. The frequent use of songs and rhymes mean that children enjoy and remember their learning. As a result, they get off to a flying start.

The school has reset expectations for behaviour and attendance. The school works closely with families where absence is an issue. Attendance has risen, including for pupils with SEND. The work to improve behaviour is less well established. Where there are higher level incidents, the school supports pupils well through the work of the school's new behaviour 'hub'. However, there is not a culture of positive behaviour throughout the school. This sometimes impacts negatively on pupils' achievements and socialisation.

There is an appropriate curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Sometimes, pupils articulate this important content well, for example, regarding democracy and road safety. However, they do not get the help they need to develop rich and connected knowledge in PSHE and other aspects of the personal development programme. As a result, their understanding lacks depth.

Governors have been instrumental in turning the school around. They know where there is more to do and challenge when required. Governors and school leaders support staff well-being carefully. This is during a period of high change. Staff understand the need for a better curriculum. They buy into any increased workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not deliver the curriculum consistently well. There is variability in how well staff plan, model and check learning. This means pupils achieve less well than they should. The school needs to ensure that staff receive the training they require to implement the curriculum the way the school intends.

- Pupils with SEND do not always get the quality of support that they need. Staff are not routinely clear on how to give these pupils the best help. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not understand the work and engage with their learning as well as they should. The school must ensure that staff are trained to use the guidance and support that these pupils need so that they can learn successfully.
- The school's new expectations of behaviour are not securely embedded. Behaviour is variable, both in lessons and throughout the school day. The school needs to establish its expectations fully to continue the shift towards a positive culture of behaviour.
- The school has not achieved its aims for developing pupils' positive character traits through the programme for personal development. The school does not support pupils fully to develop a deep and connected understanding of content in PSHE and other parts of the programme. They sometimes do not embody the school's values. The school should ensure pupils understand the aims and content of its programme better, so they develop positive character traits more confidently through applying these.

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	110602
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345104
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	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ali England
Headteacher	Amy Luu
Website	www.bassingbourn.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 April 2022

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed on 1 September 2024 and 1 January 2024 respectively. Previously, the headteacher was interim executive headteacher over this and another school between January and August 2024. There are several new subject leaders.
- The chair of governors was elected in December 2023.
- Since January 2022, Cambridgeshire local authority has had in place a 'rapid improvement group' to help the school raise standards.
- The school does not currently use any 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 judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued 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 deputy and assistant headteachers, other leaders, staff, and pupils. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met with the chair and three other governors. The lead inspector held a meeting by phone with a representative from Cambridgeshire local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics, design and technology, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- As part of evaluating personal development, inspectors considered the curriculum for PSHE, including relationships, sex and health 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 reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, school development plans, policies and documentation for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. They considered the responses to Ofsted’s questionnaires for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Charlotte Martin	Ofsted Inspector
James Adkins	Ofsted Inspector

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