

Inspection of Bassingbourn Primary School

Brook Road, Bassingbourn, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5NP

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel the school is improving as a result of actions taken by leaders. However, this improvement is not yet embedded across the school.

Pupils feel the school is now calmer than previously and teachers now work with them to resolve issues. Pupils value the friendship and buddy system. They feel this helps to keep any bullying issues to a minimum. Pupils feel confident to report any concerns through the 'worry box' and say these get followed up well.

Pupils learn about issues such as gender equality. Girls in particular speak passionately about inspirational figures such as Florence Nightingale. Older pupils value the opportunity to have their voices heard through the student council. More needs to be done to involve younger pupils in this.

Pupils' experiences vary across the school. In some subjects, such as physical education, pupils have access to a range of festivals, clubs and competitions and provision is tailored to meet the needs of all. In other subjects, pupils do not have their needs as well met. For example pupils enjoy having access to a range of books and texts, but some do not have the targeted support they need to decode and blend words effectively.

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

The school's curriculum broadly matches the ambition of the national curriculum. Leaders have set out what knowledge they want pupils to know through 'knowledge organisers' and have broad outlines of how this progresses across the school. In some subjects, planning lacks precision and detail. As a result, the curriculum is at different stages of development depending upon the subject.

Leaders do not always set out clearly enough what vocabulary and concepts must be taught. Some teachers assess against objectives which are too broad. This does not identify what knowledge pupils do and do not know well enough. As a result, teachers do not identify and address some of the gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Some pupils at the school are able to read fluently and are keen to talk about what they are reading. Some pupils talk about high-quality texts that they use in class. However, leaders do not plan the progression of these texts precisely enough. They do not determine which books pupils should read next in order to further develop their skills of reading. Some teachers have not had sufficient training in order to teach pupils to read well.

The weakest readers are not always given the help they need. The books they read are not matched well to the sounds they are learning. As a result, they struggle to decode the words in the books. Leaders do not ensure that pupils, especially those

with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn to read fluently and well. Their needs are not precisely enough catered for.

Where leaders have prioritised areas for improvement, the impact of this is evident. For example, in mathematics, staff have had a programme of training in a new 'mastery' approach. As a result, pupils explore mathematics in more depth and teachers ensure that pupils have learned what they need to before moving on. The use of pictorial and physical representations of what they are learning helps pupils to solve mathematical problems. Pupils say this makes mathematics easier to understand and helps them to not get stuck. Children in the early years foundation stage have secured understanding of number and are well prepared for their next steps in Year 1.

Pupils are generally calm and focused in lessons. They are encouraged to make positive choices about how they behave. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly way, including in early years, where children have well-established routines for sharing and moving from activities to carpet time.

Pupils have access to a variety of pastoral support, which includes counselling from trained professionals to support their well-being. Pupils learn about different types of relationships, including LGBTQ+. Pupils are generally tolerant and see difference as being positive. Pupils benefit from a range of activities to support a healthy lifestyle, including access to swimming for all and a 'trim trail'.

Leaders are now focused on improving the school, and their work in improving some subject areas. However, there is more to do to ensure education is of a good quality, particularly with regard to developing early reading and ensuring high-quality provision is in place across the entire curriculum. Some of leaders' plans for improvement lack detail and so are not as helpful as they should be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has appropriate procedures in place for training staff. This includes core training and refreshers around key issues. As a result, staff are clear on how to identify and report safeguarding concerns, and a culture of vigilance has been established.

Pupils have a variety of ways to report concerns and are listened to. They have been taught each year about e-safety and staying safe online and are generally well informed about potential dangers

Appropriate safeguarding records and checks are made. However, in moving to a new electronic system, leaders' ability to access all information in a timely way is hindered. This does not make pupils unsafe, but can cause some delays in decision-making. Leaders expect this situation to resolve once the system is embedded.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made sure that staff have the knowledge and expertise they need to support pupils effectively with early reading. Some books pupils read are not matched to what pupils can decode. As a result, some pupils are not able to read as well as they should, as they are unable to decode and blend words well enough. Leaders must ensure that they implement an improved and consistent approach to early reading and synthetic phonics.
- The quality of the curriculum is inconsistent. In some subjects, knowledge and skills are not planned precisely enough to build on what pupils have learned before. As a result, pupils struggle to make connections with previous learning and they do not secure or retain knowledge as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum sequences progression in each subject clearly.
- Leaders' plans for improvement sometimes lack precision and necessary detail. Therefore, improvement planning does not always have the necessary impact as targets are not clear and precise. Leaders need to ensure improvement planning across all areas of the school is fit for purpose.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	110602
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10211435
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr Hilary Hodge
Headteacher	Chloe Coles
Website	www.bassingbourn.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The new part-time co-headteacher took up her post in September 2021.
- The school currently has one pupil who attends a registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science, physical education, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited some social science lessons.

- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the SEND coordinator, local governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors explored the school’s safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 68 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, including 46 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 40 responses to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire and the 101 responses to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Cindy Impey	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Daniel Short	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jo Nutbeam	Ofsted Inspector

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