

Inspection of a good school: Bexton Primary School

Blackhill Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 9DB

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 April 2023

Outcome

Bexton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to belong to this vibrant school community. The warm and positive relationships they build with staff and each other help them to feel happy and safe. Pupils use 'worry boxes' to let their teachers know if they are concerned about anything. On the rare occasions when bullying occurs, leaders take prompt and sensitive action to address this swiftly.

Pupils enjoy exploring and creating new games and activities with the range of materials and equipment provided at lunchtimes to spark their imagination. Pupils said that the 'buddy sofa' helps to make sure that everyone has someone to play with.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), strive to live up to the Bexton values and are proud of how they 'never give up!'. They achieve well. Pupils behave well, both around the school and in lessons. They are enthusiastic when talking about their learning.

Pupils understand the importance of respect for all. They said that everyone is welcome in their school. Pupils enjoy working with members of the wider community to share their passion for learning. They value the wide range of clubs on offer to them, including those for photography and golf.

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

Leaders are aspirational for all pupils. This is reflected in the carefully designed, engaging and ambitious curriculum. They are clear about the important knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which this knowledge should be taught. Leaders have ensured that this knowledge builds in a thoughtful way from the provision for two-year-old children and the Nursery classes to Year 6.

Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable about the subjects that they lead. They make sure that staff are trained well to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers usually use their strong subject knowledge to present and explain information clearly to pupils. As a result, most pupils develop a secure understanding of key concepts that builds on what they already know. However, there are times when teachers do not design learning in a way that helps pupils to learn all that they could. This hinders some pupils from deepening their understanding.

In most subjects, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check whether pupils have learned and remembered key knowledge. They have systems in place to address any gaps in pupils' learning promptly when these arise. This allows teachers to adapt their teaching, so that pupils revisit missed or forgotten knowledge. However, in a small number of subjects, the checks that teachers make do not accurately identify gaps in key knowledge. This makes it harder for teachers to pinpoint accurately how successfully pupils have understood and retained important knowledge and skills over time.

Leaders are determined that pupils learn to read well. They have successfully introduced a new phonics programme. Staff have been provided with training and teach the content confidently. Children begin to learn rhymes and songs when they join the Nursery classes. Leaders ensure that the books that pupils read match the sounds they are learning in class. Skilled staff check that pupils are keeping up in reading and support them to catch up if they need any extra help. Almost all pupils are confident, fluent readers by the time they reach key stage 2.

Most pupils enjoy reading and do so widely, in and out of school. Pupils enjoy using the reading bus at break- and lunchtimes. Staff read to pupils regularly, and pupils said that they enjoy this time greatly.

Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life. Leaders identify the individual needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. They make sure that pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, receive the right support in a timely manner. Teachers adapt the delivery of learning activities effectively to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are met. Pupils with complex SEND receive personalised and bespoke support.

There is a calm atmosphere around school. Children in early years settle into routines quickly. Pupils display positive attitudes towards learning. They can concentrate in their lessons because any disruption to their learning is rare.

Leaders place great importance on pupils' wider development. Pupils are supported to be active and responsible citizens. They learn about fundamental British values and understand how these are reflected in the school's values. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Staff appreciate that leaders are mindful of their workload. They enjoy working at the school. Governors and trustees are well informed about the quality of education for pupils. As a result, they know when to challenge and when to support leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training. Staff know pupils well. They respond quickly to any signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that staff know how to report any safeguarding concerns that they may have. Leaders act on these concerns in a timely and appropriate way. They make sure that vulnerable pupils get the help and support they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They are taught about the importance of not sharing personal information. Staff teach pupils about how to be safe when they are near roads or around strangers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, staff do not choose the most appropriate approaches to help pupils learn effectively. As a result, from time to time, some pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers more consistently design learning that meets the needs of all pupils in their classes.
- In a small number of subjects, systems for checking how well pupils are remembering key concepts in the long term do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This means that in these subjects, leaders and teachers cannot be certain that pupils have understood and retained important knowledge over time. Leaders should make sure that they further refine assessment strategies in these subjects, so that teachers can check that pupils have retained their learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bexton Primary School, to be good in January 2018.

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](#)' 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	147133
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10283658
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	494
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Janet Myers
Headteacher	Emily Armstrong
Website	www.bexton.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bexton Primary School converted to become an academy school in August 2019 and is part of Cheshire Academies Trust, a multi-academy trust. When its predecessor school, Bexton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- There is provision for two-year-olds in the Nursery class.
- The school operates a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND on behalf of the local authority. This caters for ten pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2. These pupils have complex needs.
- The governing body operates a breakfast club and after-school club.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders and teachers. She visited

lessons, looked at examples of pupils' and children's work, and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.

- The inspector heard pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult. She also considered the curriculum, spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The inspector spoke with the chief executive officer, trustees (including the chair of the trust), members of the governing body, the headteacher and other school leaders. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years and SEND.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of school. She looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' and children's welfare and education. She observed pupils' and children's behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. She discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. She also checked the single central record.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with parents and carers at the start of the school day. She took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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