

Inspection of Bitham Brook Primary School

Arundell Close, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 3UA

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils live out the school's vision of, 'In a community of kindness where all belong, be positive, be resilient, be creative'. They are polite, respectful and welcoming to all. Relationships across the school are warm. This helps all pupils to feel safe and well cared for. They know there are trusted adults who will help them if they have problems.

Parents are positive about the school. They value the opportunities the school provides to develop their children's interests. They say their children are 'always doing things'. Activities including musical theatre, dance and art develop pupils' creativity. Trips and visits support pupils to develop their confidence. The benefit of these show in pupils' attitudes to learning. They show determination when faced with challenge and persevere to overcome difficulties.

Pupils feel their voice counts. They are proud that their ideas contribute towards school improvement. For instance, the recently introduced 'Bitham Badges' reward pupils for demonstrating the school's values. Pupils realise that the school has undergone many changes and say these are for the better. They recognise the improvements leaders have made to the quality of education.

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

Leaders and governors are aspirational for pupils at Bitham Brook. They have tackled weaknesses in the school and made structural change to ensure pupils learn well. Classes are organised, so the curriculum is more coherent. The restructure of the leadership team has built capacity to improve the quality of education.

Leaders know what makes learning effective. They are in the process of refining the curriculum to ensure it is of the highest quality. Where this is complete, it has been done meticulously and with ambition. Leaders have identified the key knowledge pupils will learn. They have designed learning to help pupils know and remember more over time. However, this has not yet been completed for all areas of the curriculum. Where this is not as fully developed or embedded, important learning is not explicit enough. The learning pupils are given does not always match precisely what leaders want them to know. As a result, pupils are less able to articulate their learning or build their knowledge as well over time.

As soon as children start school, there is a sharp focus on developing their language. Staff ask questions to extend pupils' vocabulary and give clear explanations of words they may not understand. For example, when reading about plants, one teacher explained 'when a plant is in bloom, it is going to flower'. The impact of this work is evident in pupils' writing. As they move through the school, pupils produce writing that contains adventurous language, chosen for effect. However, pupils do not always apply their knowledge of spelling and punctuation or present their work well.

Leaders understand that weaknesses in pupils' reading will limit their life chances. They aim to ensure all pupils read with confidence and accuracy. The curriculum is adapted for pupils who have gaps in their understanding, so they secure key knowledge as soon as possible. They provide pupils with books that support them to practise using their phonics. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), become more fluent. Older pupils develop strong comprehension. Inspiring books, like 'The Boy in the Back of the Class' and 'Goodnight Mr Tom', support pupils' personal development. They help them understand themes such as refugees and bereavement. They support pupils to show empathy and tolerance for others.

Teachers adjust learning to ensure that pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well. They provide resources to help these pupils access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND have learning targets that are well matched to their needs. These targets are embedded in classroom practice.

In reading and mathematics, there are clear systems that support teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use this information to inform pupils' next steps in learning. Leaders know these systems are not yet well developed across the curriculum and how this can affect how pupils learn. In addition, pupils' misconceptions can sometimes go unaddressed. This can prevent them building upon what they already know.

As a result of high expectations and clear routines, pupils behave well and attend regularly. In lessons, they listen carefully and focus on their learning. Pupils enjoy playtimes. They know bullying is rare and leaders are quick to deal with it if it occurs. Leaders work actively alongside the family link worker to support families to demonstrably improve pupils' attendance.

Staff are proud to be part of the Bitham Brook team. Most appreciate that leaders' ongoing work to revise the curriculum will help them become more knowledgeable and enable them to manage their workload more effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a culture where staff prioritise keeping pupils safe. They are alert to any potential risk and raise concerns without delay. Leaders are quick to liaise with outside agencies to secure the help pupils need.

Governors check that safeguarding is effective. They make sure that all staff and visitors are safe to be with children.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from risks in the local area and those that are more widespread. This includes being safe online. Pupils can explain what makes

relationships healthy. They know how to protect themselves from relationships that are unhealthy.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Where the curriculum is not as fully developed or embedded, learning is not made explicit enough. As a result, the learning that pupils are given does not always match precisely what leaders want them to know. Leaders need to ensure that the work to refine the curriculum is complete, so that the curriculum in all areas is as well embedded and ambitious as those already more established. This will ensure that pupils develop deep knowledge across the whole curriculum.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' written work do not consistently reflect the same ambition of the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not consistently apply their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation or present their work well. Leaders need to ensure that teachers raise their expectations of pupils' writing across all subjects, so that pupils apply what they know consistently, accurately and with pride.
- Assessment is not consistently used to identify pupils' gaps in learning across all areas of the curriculum. This means that learning is not always based upon pupils' prior knowledge and that important misconceptions can go unaddressed. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is robust across all subjects to ensure that learning is based upon pupils' starting points and the key knowledge they need to learn.

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	126291
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10256683
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Lucy Noble
Headteacher	Gareth Simons
Website	www.bithambrook.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to leadership, staffing and governance since the last inspection.
- In the last few years, the school has undergone considerable structural change. These include changes to the published admissions number, how classes are organised, and building works to accommodate the school's increasing numbers.
- The school runs an on-site breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use alternative providers.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, groups of staff, parents, groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed samples of work in other subjects and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. They also checked bullying records, behaviour logs and attendance information.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to see how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steph Matthews, lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Laura Bennett

Ofsted Inspector

Spencer Allen

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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