

Inspection of Buckminster Primary School

School Lane, Buckminster, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 5RZ

Inspection dates:

31 January and 2 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff care about pupils. However, weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements mean that pupils may be at risk of potential harm. Staff do not act decisively and effectively when concerns about a pupil's welfare are raised.

Pupils attend school well. They play enthusiastically with their friends and look after each other. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm. Pupils know how to behave and most conduct themselves well. Lessons are occasionally disrupted but pupils say this does not stop them learning. Bullying is unusual and staff resolve any issues quickly. Parents and carers commonly praise the school's 'family feel'.

Pupils learn how to be respectful and resilient. They like having responsibilities. Many pupils benefit from taking part in activities including netball club, film club and wheelchair basketball. They enjoy working hard. Pupils say teachers help them if they get stuck. However, the curriculum in some subjects is not organised well enough. Pupils sometimes cannot remember, or get confused about, what they have learned in these subjects.

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

Leaders are in the process of reviewing the curriculum. In some subjects, they have thought about what pupils need to learn and in what order. Leaders have considered how best to teach new subject content to pupils learning in mixed-age classes. They provide opportunities for pupils to revisit the most important knowledge. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), secure their learning. In mathematics, pupils of different ages often study the same topic. However, teachers modify the content to reflect pupils' different starting points. Recap questions and 'minute maths' activities help pupils to remember key information and build on what they know. Teachers often check pupils' mathematical understanding. They provide pupils with extra help if necessary.

In other subjects, leaders have taken too long to organise the curriculum. They have not identified exactly what they want pupils to know or when. In both geography and art, for example, the curriculum is disjointed and lacks ambition. Pupils in mixed-age classes all learn the same thing. Teachers do not take pupils' different ages and needs into account well enough when planning activities. Pupils sometimes miss important content and get confused about what subject they are learning. They often cannot recall important knowledge in these subjects accurately or confidently.

There is a strong focus on developing pupils' speech, language and communication skills. Children in the early years provision enjoy singing songs, listening to stories and learning new words. Teachers use a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Pupils learn how to sound out unfamiliar words and build up their phonic knowledge. However, some pupils fall behind their peers. They read books that are not matched closely to the letters and sounds they know. They struggle to decode words and

cannot make sense of the stories they read. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils who are confident readers to practise their skills. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy spotting rhyme, rhythm and repetition when they read poetry. Pupils are enthusiastic about choosing their own reading books from the wide variety available.

Children in the early years get off to a good start thanks to a well-planned curriculum. There are many opportunities for children to practise their handwriting and number work. Play is purposeful. Diverse activity choices encourage children to develop their fine- and gross-motor skills. They happily share, take turns and look after each other. Relationships with adults are positive and supportive. Children thrive in this environment and are well prepared when they move into key stage 1.

Pupils understand how to stay mentally and physically fit. They know how to protect their identity and location when they are online. Pupils appreciate why it is important to look after the environment. However, they cannot remember what they have learned about important British values such as democracy and freedom of speech. Pupils have a muddled understanding of different faiths and cultures. Many of the trips and visits enjoyed before the pandemic have not resumed.

The school's leadership arrangements are not secure. Recent changes have begun to improve the school. Leaders engage well with staff and take account of their workload. However, leaders do not have the capacity to make all the improvements necessary. Governors have only recently started to receive comprehensive information about the school from leaders. Governors do not fully understand their legal duties, particularly concerning safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders, including members of the governing body, have not ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements follow the guidance issued by the secretary of state. Governors have not ensured that there is a trained and knowledgeable member of staff to manage and deal with safeguarding matters in the absence of the headteacher.

Leaders recognise that they do not have the knowledge or capacity to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders are uncertain what to do if they think a pupil needs help or protection. This leaves vulnerable pupils at risk of harm. For example, leaders do not know when, or how, to refer safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Staff have had some safeguarding training. However, they do not have up-to-date knowledge of important issues, such as harmful sexual behaviour, including child-on-child abuse.

Systems to raise concerns about pupils are not robust. It is not always clear what, if any, actions have been taken in response to safeguarding concerns.

At the time of the inspection, leaders did not know what checks they should complete to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. By the end of the inspection, all required checks had been completed.

Leaders do not review safeguarding arrangements before pupils start to attend alternative providers.

While leaders have started to rectify some of these failings, serious weaknesses remain.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors have not established a culture of safeguarding vigilance. Leaders are not knowledgeable enough about their safeguarding responsibilities. They do not check the school's safeguarding systems closely enough. These serious weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements leave pupils potentially at risk. School leaders and governors must ensure that they understand their statutory safeguarding duties thoroughly. Leaders must implement robust safeguarding practices and procedures, including in relation to safer recruitment and the school's use of alternative providers, so that they are confident in their actions to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders' capacity to improve the school is limited. They have not done enough to tackle weaknesses in the school's quality of education, the personal development programme, or safeguarding arrangements. Governors need to ensure that school leaders have the time, the knowledge, and the support they need to carry out their roles effectively.
- Leaders have not thought carefully enough about exactly what pupils need to learn and when, in many of the foundation subjects. Pupils struggle to secure their knowledge in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculums in the foundation subjects are well planned and logically sequenced so that pupils' knowledge and understanding of these subjects build over time.
- The curriculum is not modified well enough to meet the different needs and abilities of pupils in mixed-age classes. Some pupils are not challenged or supported sufficiently well. They do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in each subject is modified to take into account the different ages and stages of pupils in each class, so that their needs are well met.
- Some pupils at the early stages of learning to read do not always read books that are well matched to their knowledge of phonics. These pupils struggle to read fluently or accurately and fall behind their peers. Leaders need to ensure that

these pupils read books that are well suited to their phonic knowledge, so that they become confident readers.

- The personal development programme does not focus well enough on teaching pupils about what it means to live in modern Britain. Pupils cannot easily recall important British values such as democracy and freedom of speech. Their understanding of different faiths and cultures is confused and inaccurate. Leaders should make sure that pupils understand the different British values and why they matter. They should ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the rich variety of faiths and cultures in British society.

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 (DfE) 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	119910
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10268870
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katherine Coleman
Headteacher	Debbie Clarke
Website	www.buckminster.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was absent from school during the inspection. The assistant headteacher is leading the school currently.
- The assistant headteacher is in her second year of being in the role.
- The chair of the governing body was appointed to the post in July 2021.
- The school uses the services of one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 assistant headteacher. They met with other school staff, including staff responsible for the early years provision and for the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. She spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and considered pupils' work. They spoke with pupils and teachers. They heard pupils read. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from different year groups. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks, holding discussions with safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils, and reviewing documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation audit and the school improvement plan. They considered information about pupils' attendance and behaviour, and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Liz White	Ofsted Inspector
Aoife Galletly	His Majesty's Inspector

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