

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Bulwell St Mary's Primary and Nursery School

Ragdale Road, Bulwell, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG6 8GQ

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

Outcome

Bulwell St Mary's Primary and Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Julia Burge. This school is part of Transform Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rebecca Meredith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike Butler.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly and helpful school. They understand their 'take care' values, which are based on the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils try hard to uphold these each day. Pupils who are 'take care leaders' take pride in rewarding others when they see pupils take care of themselves, each other, their work or school and community.

Staff typically have high expectations of behaviour and for pupils' learning. Many pupils live up to these expectations. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils say that teachers are kind and help them to learn new things. On occasion, when pupils struggle with school life, they are well supported. Pupils enjoy spending time with their friends in the playground. This is a fun place for pupils to spend time together. However, on occasion, some pupils need to be reminded to play sensibly.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. Many parents and carers agree that they are. Pupils are confident to tell an adult if they have a problem, and they trust that they will be listened to and supported.

A wide range of experiences are available for pupils to enjoy. There are strong links with the church and the local community. For example, pupils enjoy participating in 'community

action week' by planting flowers in the community garden. There are various clubs on offer, in which many pupils take part. Dodgeball is a current favourite.

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

The trust and the school have worked hard to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education. The school has developed the curriculum to make sure that it is well thought out and carefully designed in many subjects. This is helping pupils with their learning. This is particularly the case for reading and mathematics as well as in other subjects in the wider curriculum. Changes to the curriculum are still taking place in some subjects. For example, writing is still in the early stages of development.

The school has a keen focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. The school encourages pupils to use precise vocabulary to express themselves and to explain their thinking. This approach begins in early years. For example, pupils can confidently describe what an amphibian is and where it may live. Children in the Reception class can confidently show various ways to make the number three.

In most subjects, staff help pupils recall prior knowledge and connect it to what they are learning now. Pupils enjoy sharing what they have learned. Staff take time to explain and model learning clearly. Pupils appreciate this, as it helps them to understand new learning quickly. The school is beginning to introduce digital technology to support learning. While this is in the early stages, pupils say that they enjoy the immediate support it can provide. One pupil said, 'It is like having your own teacher.'

The school has developed a clearer understanding of the needs of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In mathematics lessons, staff use resources well to ensure that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, can access the planned curriculum. However, in some other areas of the curriculum, this is in the very early stages. Some pupils with SEND do not always receive suitable support to allow them to be successful in their learning. Sometimes, pupils receive work that is too hard.

The school has made reading a high priority. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading, including phonics. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning to read, with pupils now achieving more highly than that seen previously. Many pupils enjoy reading age-appropriate books. Many pupils are confident and fluent readers. They speak enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. Pupils are excited about their library reopening following the flood damage.

The school has high expectations for pupils to attend school every day and many pupils do. Systems in place to improve attendance are making a positive impact.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils are knowledgeable about protected characteristics, diversity and discrimination. They visit different places of worship. Pupils also have opportunities to develop leadership roles. They enjoy the responsibility of being prayer leader during collective worship. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and demonstrate a clear understanding of what being a good friend means.

The school also helps pupils to look after their mental health. Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors and members of the trust often visit the school. They ensure that leaders keep them well informed and support is provided. Together, leaders' actions have been well targeted. They have raised standards and the quality of education in school. Most staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for writing is in the early stages of implementation. There is not yet a consistent approach to teaching writing. Pupils do not always write with the necessary fluency. Leaders must ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to teach the writing curriculum consistently so that pupils are able to write confidently.
- Occasionally, staff do not adapt how they teach the curriculum well enough, particularly for some pupils with SEND. These pupils sometimes struggle to access a suitably ambitious curriculum. The school should ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to support all pupils with SEND in their learning so that these pupils can be successful.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bulwell St Mary's Primary and Nursery School, to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2014.

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	143015
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10347619
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Butler
CEO of the trust	Rebecca Meredith
Headteacher	Julia Burge
Website	www.bulwellstmarys.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by June 2025.
- The school has provision for three-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2024. There have been three changes of headteacher since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, and leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector met with the CEO of the trust and two other trust representatives. She also met with the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with parents and took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also spoke with groups of pupils and staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including information available on the school's website.

Inspection team

Heidi Bastock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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