

Inspection of Balsall Common Primary School

Balsall Street East, Balsall Common, Coventry, West Midlands CV7 7FS

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Mark Mitchell. This school is part of Central Schools 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), Graeme Burgess, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Jane Miller.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2014.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour. They understand the importance of being kind and caring to each other. The school's values are understood and modelled by all. Pupils are respectful to each other and staff. They hold doors open and welcome visitors to their school with smiles and good manners.

Pupils are eager to talk about the range of exciting opportunities they are offered to develop their talents and interests. Those pupils who hold leadership roles take such responsibility seriously and know that their voice matters. They are committed to representing other pupils' views.

Staff are dedicated to making learning exciting, and this helps pupils to feel happy and motivated at school. A newly developed curriculum has raised expectations of what pupils can do and is now supporting pupils to achieve well. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and concentrate well in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well to access the same learning as their peers.

Pupils enjoy performing the school rap. This helps them remember the importance of being active members of their community and showing initiative. Pupils are so proud to have raised lots of money for those in need and continue to think of new ways to contribute positively to local charities.

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

There have been some significant changes in leadership at this school in the last few years. The vision and values that have been instilled in pupils are reflected in their exemplary behaviour. Dedicated leaders are increasingly ensuring that they deliver a high-quality education to all pupils. Leaders are supported by an equally committed team of staff and trustees, who share these high aspirations. Further work is required to support staff who hold responsibility for delivering school improvement actions. Some staff require support to assess how well improvement actions are impacting on pupils' learning.

Staff well-being matters to leaders. Any pressures they face are taken seriously and addressed. Staff receive lots of training opportunities to improve their practice. Many feel that the training they have had on the recent changes to the curriculum is helping to support pupils to gain a better understanding of their learning. However, more support is required to enable staff to deliver the subject-specific knowledge and skills expected in the curriculum.

The school's curriculum is now sequenced effectively to ensure that learning builds progressively. Pupils learn new knowledge well and they are increasingly able to link prior knowledge to new learning. They enjoy reading books that are linked to the topics they study as this helps bring learning to life. However, in some subjects, in key stages 1 and 2, the school is not checking the subject-specific knowledge and skills that pupils need to master to become better at the subject.

Pupils are increasingly fluent readers and mathematicians. Many pupils learn to decode and read independently by the time they reach Year 2. An increasing number of pupils learn their multiplication tables, which helps them to calculate at a faster pace. Those who require additional support to keep up with their learning in mathematics and reading are supported well to do so.

Children in the early years get off to a fantastic start. Many begin to learn to swim from their first days in school and practise new routines, such as getting themselves dressed and ready for learning. Children maintain concentration when exploring new learning and show an eagerness to understand the world around them. Adults help children to think more deeply about their learning, for example through skilful questioning. Children love to explore the outdoor environment. They develop an understanding of how to manage risk while also being adventurous. Children develop a love of stories and enjoy re-enacting them with their friends.

The school has effective systems in place for early identification of any SEND needs that pupils may have. Staff complete accurate assessments of pupils' needs in partnership with external agencies. Staff make effective use of this information to support pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers. All pupils have equal access to the wider opportunities that the school offers, and the school seeks the views of pupils with SEND to support them in developing their talents and interests. Such opportunities extend beyond those which are already offered.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, and attendance rates are high. Few pupils are persistently absent from school, with many motivated to attend because they do not want to miss socialising with their friends or taking part in the wide range of clubs on offer. Pupils learn about diversity and discrimination, and they enjoy it when visitors come to talk to them about such issues.

The provision for the wider personal development of pupils is exceptional. Pupils learn how to stay safe both online and in the real world. They celebrate their differences and understand that everybody is unique. Pupils feel lucky to attend this school, and parents agree that their children are supported well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, in key stages 1 and 2, the school is not checking the subject-specific knowledge and skills that pupils need to master to become better at the subject. As a result, opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding are missed. The school should

ensure that subject-specific knowledge and skills support its assessments of how well pupils perform in some subjects.

- Staff do not always deliver the subject-specific knowledge and skills expected and outlined in the curriculum effectively. Consequently, not all pupils are supported to become more proficient in some subjects. The school should ensure that all staff have the necessary support to deliver the curriculum as intended.
- Further work is required to support staff who hold responsibility for delivering school improvement actions. Some are not yet accurately assessing how well improvement actions are impacting on pupils' learning. The school should ensure that those with responsibility for assessing the impact of the curriculum are supported to do so effectively.

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	138536
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10343979
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	670
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Jane Miller
CEO of the trust	Graeme Burgess
Headteacher	Mark Mitchell
Website	www.balsallcommonprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2014, under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Central Schools Trust. There is one other school in this trust.
- A new headteacher and two assistant headteachers have been appointed at this school since the last inspection.
- The school is not currently using alternative provision.
- The school operates before- and after-school provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, geography and design technology. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. The lead inspector also heard a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects, such as history and art and design.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 lead inspector spoke with the trust CEO.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust board and four other trustees.
- Inspectors considered the survey responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments from parents.
- Inspectors also evaluated the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Tony Bradshaw, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Zoe Thewlis	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Quinn	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Bennett	Ofsted Inspector

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