

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Bluebell Primary School

Lovelace Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7DS

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 January 2025

Outcome

Bluebell Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Helen Plowman. This school is part of Broad Horizons Education 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), Owen Jenkins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris Snudden.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils display the school's vision of 'to be kind to ourselves, to each other and our world'. They make new arrivals and visitors feel part of the school community. This is because they care about each other and celebrate differences. Children in the early years 'tell the teacher' when they have seen someone being kind. This creates an environment where pupils feel happy and secure.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Children in early years learn the curriculum effectively. Most pupils produce high-quality work. They can recall important knowledge confidently, such as historical facts about the Romans. However, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills. These pupils benefit from lots of effective catch-up support in reading, writing and mathematics. This helps close these gaps well and also helps these pupils with their learning of the wider curriculum.

Pupils behave well. They enjoy developing their interests through a range of clubs, including karate, dodgeball and basketball. Pupils who need it get lots of extra support from staff in the nurture room. Staff help pupils to understand and deal with their feelings and to behave positively. This means that there are few instances when pupils' learning is disrupted by the behaviour of others.

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

Since the predecessor school was inspected, there was a period when standards of

behaviour and the quality of education slipped. The school and trust have taken effective action to turn things around while working effectively with staff to minimise the impact on their workload. Improvements in the management of pupils' behaviour mean the number of suspensions has reduced. The school's actions to improve pupils' attendance are bearing fruit. Improvements accelerated further following the formation of the new trust.

The school has redeveloped the curriculum to be broad and ambitious. Pupils now build knowledge explicitly in subjects such as geography and history. They recall important knowledge clearly. For example, they remember key features of physical and human geography and build their historical understanding of chronology well. They deepen this understanding through exciting activities, trips and visits, for example building a Stone Age den. While the improvements are clear in the quality of education current pupils receive, they are not yet fully reflected in pupils' outcomes in national tests and assessments.

The school teaches pupils to learn to read well. The teaching of phonics is effective and supports pupils to read fluently. Staff provide lots of additional support and catch up for pupils who need it. Learning to read has boosted these pupils' confidence. This has overcome their previous frustrations about being able to read successfully.

Leaders' actions to raise standards by changes to the curriculum and how it is taught are making a positive difference. Consequently, most pupils secure mathematical understanding well and produce high-quality written work. However, this impact is less evident for some pupils. This is because some pupils have not benefited as much from improvements leaders have made to the curriculum. Leaders are aware of this. They are taking appropriate action to raise standards and close knowledge and skills gaps so that these pupils catch up.

In Nursery and Reception, children get off to a strong start. There are many interesting and stimulating activities for them to explore, both indoors and outside. Staff support children's early speech and language development well by questioning children effectively about what they are doing. They carefully check how well pupils secure early learning and provide suitable additional support if needed. Children acquire the knowledge and attitudes needed for successful learning in Year 1.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a particular strength of the school. The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). Staff form caring relationships with pupils. This includes supporting pupils from the specially resourced provision to learn in mainstream classes with their peers. Staff make adaptations that have a highly positive impact on the quality of work pupils with SEND produce.

Pupils are engaged in lessons and behave well. Suspensions are now rarely used because pupils' needs are met effectively. Pupils treat each other with respect and friendliness around school. Pupils now attend often. This is because the school works effectively to support families to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Their aspiration is developed routinely, for

example through visits to local universities. Pupils develop confidence and self-belief through residential visits and dance showcase events. The school council has a democratic say in how the school is run. There are strong links and relationships with the local community such as hosting a food bank.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Previous weaknesses in some aspects of the school's curriculum mean some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills. This means that some pupils do not produce high-quality work consistently or achieve as well as they might. The school should ensure that teachers address gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills comprehensively so that pupils achieve consistently well by the time they leave the school.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Bluebell Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2016.

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	147940
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10345530
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	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Snudden
CEO of the trust	Owen Jenkins
Headteacher	Helen Plowman
Website	www.bps-edu.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school converted to become an academy July 2020. The Broad Horizons Education Trust was formed in July 2022 from a merger between two trusts. The school had previously been part of one of these trusts since its conversion to academy status in July 2020.
- The school has a specially resourced provision that caters for up to 10 pupils with autism from Year 3 to Year 6. The local authority manages admissions to the specially resourced provision.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the previous inspection. The headteacher took up post in September 2020. The CEO took up post in November 2024.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and trust board. This included the chair of trustees.
- The inspector met with the CEO, the deputy CEO, the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspector conducted further meetings with staff regarding safeguarding, SEND provision, behaviour, attendance, pupils' personal development.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. This included visiting the specially resourced provision.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at social times.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. The inspector considered responses to the confidential online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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