

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

Bell Lane, Byfield, Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 6US

Inspection date:

17 December 2024

Outcome

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

The executive headteacher of this school is David Hibbert. The school is part of Stowe Valley Multi-Academy 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), Ranjit Samra and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Clare Chevassut. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this village school. They are happy and build strong relationships with each other. Pupils know that staff are there to help and support them, and they know who to turn to if they have any worries. Consequently, pupils feel safe and valued.

Pupils model the school's values, which include being respectful, determined and caring. They respond eagerly to the school's high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. They strive to receive the school's 'Byfield all-star' and 'superhero' awards for trying their best. Pupils behave well. When needed, the school provides additional support for pupils to allow them to take part in all aspects of school life. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's motto, 'inspire, challenge and succeed' supports pupils to be resilient and independent in their learning.

Pupils have ample opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Particular favourites include 'football Friday' and the school's eco club. The school provides many opportunities to enhance the curriculum. This includes visits to museums, dance festivals and to London. Pupils also enjoy talks from the police and local community members who encourage them to be aspirational about their futures.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. Pupils' learning across all subjects has been clearly sequenced and is carefully planned from early years through to Year 6. The curriculum in early years prepares children well for the next stage of their education. Pupils build their knowledge over time. Teachers are well trained and have secure knowledge of the subjects that they teach. When possible, pupils with SEND are supported to access learning alongside their peers. When this is not possible, these pupils work in small groups with strong support from adults. Staff are trained in how to identify pupils with potential SEND and do so quickly. The school draws on external expertise to support these pupils when needed.

The school checks pupils' knowledge of phonics effectively. It uses this information to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to provide support when needed. However, in some subjects, checks of what pupils know are not used consistently well. This means that some teaching is not well informed by the identification of misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils do not always have a secure foundation for future learning.

Children's early experiences of mathematics and learning to read ensure that they get off to a sound start to their education. Reading is a top priority at this school. Children in Nursery enjoy listening to stories and songs before more formal teaching begins in the Reception Year. Phonics sessions ensure that pupils systematically learn the sounds that letters make and become increasingly fluent readers. Any pupils who struggle receive support to keep up. Children in early years enjoy counting and recognising shapes and are curious mathematicians.

Pupils report that bullying is rare. The behaviour policy is applied consistently and is well understood. In lessons, most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. While attendance levels are comparatively high, the school remains relentless in improving attendance for pupils who do not come to school often enough.

The school is determined to provide pupils with opportunities that they may not otherwise receive. It offers a range of educational visits and visiting speakers, to ensure that pupils experience a diverse range of places and people. The school carefully selects texts for pupils to read, so that they learn about difference and diversity. However, pupils' knowledge of the fundamental British values, including a range of faiths and cultures, is limited. Pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as well as they could be. The curriculum for personal, social and health education teaches pupils how to lead safe, healthy lifestyles. Pupils demonstrate secure knowledge of how to stay safe, particularly online.

The trust, the governing body and the school share the same moral commitment to provide the best for every pupil, particularly those that are disadvantaged or who have SEND. Governors and members of the trust support and challenge the school well. They, and the school's leaders, are mindful of the specific challenges of a small school. They are proactive in supporting staff with their workload and well-being. As a result, morale is high, and staff feel appreciated and proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that the checks on pupils' learning are used well enough in some subjects. This means that pupils' misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge are sometimes not identified or resolved. The school should ensure that pupils' knowledge is checked carefully. It should use these checks to adjust the curriculum to make sure that pupils' knowledge is secure.
- Pupils' knowledge of the fundamental British values and of a range of faiths and cultures is not secure. They are not as well prepared for life beyond the local area as they could be. The school should ensure that pupils' experiences of a range of faiths and cultures and their understanding of the British values are secure, so that they are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

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	143468
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10366952
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Clare Chevassut
CEO of the trust	Ranjit Samra
Headteacher	David Hibbert
Website	www.byfieldschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Stowe Valley Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club that is managed by the board of trustees.

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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account of their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders. They also met with members of the governing body, and representatives of the trust, including the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school, in lessons and at playtime and lunchtime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. They spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Ashbolt

Ofsted Inspector

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