

Inspection of Little Bollington CofE Primary School

Lymm Road, Little Bollington, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 4SZ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May and 18 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Janet Gregory. This school is part of the Chester Diocesan 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), Neil Dixon, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Mason.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at this small and friendly school. They like the fact that everyone knows each other and that the differences between them and other pupils are accepted and celebrated. Pupils value the help they receive from staff, who care about them. They know that they will be listened to if they share any worries.

Pupils behave well. They adhere to the school's rules so that classrooms are calm and pupils can learn without disruption. Pupils trust their teachers to sort out disagreements fairly. Pupils are articulate. They cooperate with one another in class and they listen carefully to their teachers.

Pupils work hard. They strive to meet the school's reviewed expectations for their learning. However, while they achieve well in some subjects, they are less able to remember some of what they learn in other subjects. This is because the curriculum beyond English and mathematics is fairly recent. Some pupils have not had enough time to benefit from its ambitious subject content.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. For instance, trips to local museums and historical sites are regular features of the school calendar. Pupils enjoy a variety of clubs such as archery, dodgeball and basketball. Older pupils become 'SOS Crew' members. These pupils support others during lunchtimes and breaktimes. In so doing, they learn valuable leadership skills.

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

The school, with support from the trust, has acted quickly to action the areas for improvement identified in the March 2023 inspection. It has completely overhauled the curriculum to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn all that they should. In some subjects, this is having a positive impact. Pupils are building their knowledge more securely than they did previously. However, this is not true for some other subjects. In part, this is because many of these subject curriculums are too new to have had an impact on pupils' learning.

The school has thought about the important subject knowledge and vocabulary that it wants pupils to learn. This means that staff know what should be taught and when this should happen in mixed-aged classes. While staff have received some training to teach the more ambitious subject content, their delivery of the new curriculum is variable. In some subjects, this hinders pupils from building a secure body of knowledge over time. As a result, pupils' achievement is uneven.

Teachers usually check that pupils have understood what has been taught. However, at times, they do not spot when pupils develop misconceptions. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning that are not addressed quickly enough.

The school has started to check how well the curriculum is being taught. This work is ensuring that the school has a stronger oversight of pupils' learning. However, these

checks have not been as effective in identifying the inconsistencies in curriculum delivery.

The school's reading curriculum is well considered. Staff teach phonics consistently well. Children in the Reception class quickly learn to link sounds and letters so that they can read familiar words. This positive start is built on well as pupils enter Year 1. Teachers spot pupils early when they have difficulties in learning to read. The effective 'keep up' programme means that most pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In terms of reading, pupils are well prepared to access the key stage 2 curriculum. Teachers regularly share their own love of reading to inspire pupils to read more. Well-designed classroom spaces encourage pupils to read widely and often.

Staff identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Staff make suitable adjustments to ensure that pupils with SEND can access their learning. However, pupils with SEND experience the same inconsistencies in teaching as other pupils, so they do not achieve as well as they should.

The early years curriculum builds successfully on children's prior knowledge and experience. From the time that children join the Nursery class, staff encourage their independence, with a focus on their personal and social development. The attention paid to children's communication skills means that they listen to others and are confident to share their ideas and views. By the time that children leave the Reception class, they are well prepared for Year 1.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. Teachers deal with any poor behaviour sensitively and effectively in and out of the classroom. Pupils value the rewards that they receive in assemblies and strive to do the right thing. Most pupils attend school regularly. The school works successfully with external agencies to support the few pupils who do not.

The school fosters pupils' personal development well. Pupils receive sound guidance to help them to forge healthy relationships and to use the internet safely. The school encourages pupils to be healthy in body and mind. All pupils enjoy a range of sports and inter-school competitions. They learn effective strategies to deal with challenges and setbacks. This builds their resilience.

The trust is committed to improving the school. It provides appropriate support and challenge. Recently, there have been changes to the membership of the local governing body. These governors are benefiting from the support provided by the trust and the school.

Staff feel valued. They appreciate the support they receive from the school. Despite considerable change to the curriculum in recent months, the school has been considerate of staff's well-being and workload. Within the school, there is a culture of mutual support and professionalism.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The delivery of the new curriculum is variable across different subjects. At times, historical gaps in pupils' learning are not identified or addressed. This hinders pupils from building a secure body of knowledge over time. The school should ensure that teachers receive the support and development that they need to deliver the refreshed curriculums consistently well.
- The school's checks on the implementation of the new curriculums have not led to a secure insight into what is working well, and which areas require further refinement. This means that some pupils are not benefiting fully from the more ambitious subject content. The school should ensure that it monitors and evaluates the implementation of the new curriculums more effectively to make sure that they are having the desired impact on pupils' learning.

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	147810
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10321469
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	85
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Mason
CEO of the trust	Neil Dixon
Headteacher	Janet Gregory
Website	www.littlebollington.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school opened a pre-school nursery for three-year-old children in September 2023.
- The before-school and after-school clubs are run by the governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Chester Diocesan Academy Trust.
- This is a Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2018. The next inspection is due during the academic year 2024 to 2025.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspection started on 14 and 15 May. Inspectors returned on 18 June to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and staff throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the trust board and the local governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke with the CEO of the trust.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation related to behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding, SEND and the curriculum.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive inspectors spoke with subject leaders about their curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed some pupils' work, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning.
- The inspectors also considered other subjects. They reviewed the curriculums and pupils' work.
- The lead inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at structured and unstructured times.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the school's own surveys and feedback from the parents and carers that they met while at the school.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Woolley	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Fielding, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kirsty Norbury	His Majesty's Inspector

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