

Inspection of a good school: Baldwins Gate CofE(VC) Primary School

Tollgate Avenue, Baldwins Gate, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 5DF

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Baldwins Gate CofE(VC) Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a growing school where everyone is welcome. Pupils are kind, caring and considerate. They are exceptionally polite and proud of their achievements. This was demonstrated by a pupil who waited patiently for the inspector after school, to proudly show off his homework.

Pupils are very well behaved, happy and feel safe. They look out for each other. No learning time is lost due to poor behaviour. Pupils are highly engaged and motivated in lessons. There are very few incidents of bullying. Pupils said, 'It just does not happen here.' Pupils have been taught to settle disagreements themselves, but they also know that staff would help them to resolve any fall outs quickly.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils, both academically and socially. Pupils rise to these expectations. Leaders have created a curriculum that is ambitious. For example, children in the early years to pupils Year 6 study Shakespeare in an age-appropriate way.

Pupils embrace the school's values and Christian ethos. They also talk knowledgeably about different religions. One pupil reflected that they like having people from other faiths, cultures and backgrounds in their school because, 'We like learning from them'.

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

Leaders have crafted an ambitious curriculum that is well sequenced. The curriculum allows pupils to revisit important knowledge that leaders want them to remember. Teachers know the curriculum well and have secure subject knowledge. As a result, on most occasions, pupils' learning builds on what they already know, so they achieve well.

Leaders continue to refine and strengthen the school's curriculum in response to feedback from teachers. Teachers regularly check what pupils can remember. However, they do not always use these ongoing checks well, to adapt the curriculum when required. This means that, at times, pupils' learning does not build on what they have learned previously.

Leaders place high priority on reading across the school. Pupils enjoy reading and can talk confidently about the range of authors and genres they enjoy. One pupil said, 'I'm reading 'Holes' because my teacher suggested it to me. I read the first word and was hooked'. Staff read well-chosen books to the children every day. As a result, pupils develop a love of reading and are confident, fluent readers.

Children in Reception start to learn phonics as soon as they start school. There is a consistent approach to the delivery of the phonics curriculum. Leaders make sure that children who struggle to learn phonics get extra support to help them catch up with their classmates. Staff are well trained in the school's approach to teaching the phonics curriculum. This helps children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 to achieve well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early. Staff support pupils to access the same curriculum as their classmates. Well-trained teaching assistants also offer effective support in class when needed.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is exceptional. Break times are harmonious and pupils of all ages play well together. Activities such as skipping and football keep both boys and girls engaged.

Children in the early years quickly develop strong and respectful relationships with their friends and adults. They adapt quickly to the high expectations that leaders have of their learning and behaviour. Children understand and follow the school's routines.

Leaders carefully plan pupils' wider development. Trips and residential visits are well thought out to build up pupils' knowledge, skills and character over time. Pupils proudly take on additional responsibilities, such as being a school councillor or a house captain, or looking after younger children in the early years. Pupils know that their opinions are valued by school leaders. For example, they asked for more swimming opportunities, so leaders hired a full-size portable swimming pool for the playground. This allowed all pupils from Nursery to Year 6 to receive an intensive course of swimming lessons.

Governors are proud to work with the school and want the best for all pupils. They use school priorities to inform their visits. Governors have a clear understanding of curriculum developments and challenge leaders to ensure that new initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils.

Staff said that leaders are mindful of workload and well-being. They said they are well supported and are proud to work at the school.

Parents are very positive about the school. They appreciate the care and support their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training, so they can spot the signs that a child may be suffering from, or is at risk of harm.

Leaders know families well and understand the difficulties they may face. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that families get the support they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils shared how, before the holidays, they were reminded about the dangers associated with rivers, strangers and building sites. Pupils learn how to keep safe online. They said they feel safe and happy in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, ongoing assessment is not used effectively to ensure that pupils build on what they already know. This means that, at times, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that staff use assessment to identify precisely what pupils know and remember, and then adapt the curriculum accordingly.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 school to be good in October 2012.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	124290
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10226956
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fiona Boulton
Headteacher	Leanne Lowndes
Website	www.baldwinsgateprimary.weebly.com
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has increased in size. It has moved from mixed-age classes to single-form entry.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2022.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Lichfield.
- Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision.
- Leaders provide breakfast- and after-school care.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, the deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders. The inspector also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders and checked documents relating to safeguarding, including the checks made on staff. She also examined documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff from Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspector also spoke with pupils and staff informally during the school day.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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