

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Bunbury Aldersey CofE Primary School

School Lane, Bunbury, Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 9NR

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 January 2025

Outcome

Bunbury Aldersey CofE Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Nicola Badger. This school is part of the Rural Church Schools 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), Nicola Badger, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Piers Bostock. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bunbury Aldersey Primary provides a caring and nurturing environment. Pupils are happy and safe. They love coming to school. Pupils know that if they have any worries, there is always a member of staff who they can talk to. Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views about the school.

Pupils embody the school's values of being 'safe, kind and respectful'. They display exemplary behaviour. Pupils show kindness and consideration to all of those around them. They respect each other's differences.

Children in the early years quickly develop excellent attitudes to their learning. These positive traits can be seen in classrooms throughout the school. The school has high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the majority of subjects, pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy the excellent and varied opportunities that the school provides them with. Pupils develop character and team building skills through activities such as Bunbury's 'School Fest'. They compete with neighbouring schools in numerous sporting events. Older pupils show great maturity when carrying out their responsibilities as school councillors or head boy and girl.

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

The school provides a broad, ambitious curriculum. Learning is logically sequenced and builds from the early years. Teachers understand the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. They have strong subject knowledge and provide engaging learning activities. This helps pupils to acquire a deep understanding across different subjects. Staff regularly check what pupils know. Teachers quickly identify and address any misconceptions.

Pupils usually achieve well at this school. A recent dip in writing outcomes, due to weaknesses in the previous writing curriculum, do not reflect the overall quality of provision here. Recently, the school introduced a new writing curriculum and further training for staff. This is helping to ensure that pupils' writing matches the high ambitions and outcomes of subjects such as reading and mathematics.

The school fosters a love of reading. Children in the newly opened Nursery class listen to stories and learn rhymes. This prepares them well for their phonics learning in the Reception class. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics curriculum effectively. Frequent checks are made on pupils' phonics progress. Staff provide additional support to pupils when required. Older pupils love having books read to them by their teacher. They can access a wide range of texts from their class libraries and the 'book swap' area.

The school has effective systems in place to swiftly identify pupils with SEND. Staff successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. The school works effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the right support. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils have high rates of attendance. The school has detailed records and checks in place to ensure that pupils are safe and in school. Staff are quick to intervene and support families to overcome any barriers preventing pupils from attending school regularly.

Personal development sits at the heart of this school. Pupils learn important life skills, such as resilience. They know how to keep themselves mentally healthy and maintain healthy relationships. Pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of modern Britain is deepened through a range of carefully chosen visitors to the school. Pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance. They know how to be responsible citizens. Pupils spoke excitedly about playing board games and cooking with the local community 'ALIVE' group. Strong links with the local high school mean that older pupils are well prepared for their next step in education.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They use their knowledge and expertise to challenge and support school improvement priorities. Staff are proud to be part of the school. They appreciate the support shown for their workload and well-being. For example, leaders review any new initiatives to check the impact on staff's workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some variability in the quality of pupils' writing. The school has recently implemented a more consistent and rigorous approach to address this variability. It has also raised expectations of what pupils should achieve. The school should continue to support staff to ensure that the writing curriculum is delivered effectively so that pupils' writing skills continue to improve.

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	143155
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10366753
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	186
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Piers Bostock
CEO of the trust	Nicola Badger
Headteacher	Nicola Badger (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.bunburyaldersey.cheshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Rural Church Schools Academy Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children. The Nursery provision was opened in November 2024.
- The trustees manage the before- and after-school provisions.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector also met with the chair of governors and the deputy chair of the trust.

- The inspector spoke with a representative of the Diocese of Chester.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to some pupils reading to an adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online surveys for staff and for pupils and the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also spoke to pupils about their experiences of school.
- The inspector reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing body meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- 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.

Inspection team

John Tomlinson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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