

Inspection of Bursley Academy

Bursley Way, Bradwell, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 8JQ

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The family feel of Bursley Academy is tangible the minute you walk through the doors. Caring relationships between staff and pupils are built into the foundations of the school. Pupils trust the staff to look after them, they describe the staff as their 'guardians'. Pupils are friendly, cheerful and well mannered. They embody the welcoming nature of the school.

Leaders at all levels, including governors and the multi-academy trust (MAT), are always looking for ways to improve the school. They know that more work needs to be done to further improve the quality of education, so that pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

There is a relaxed atmosphere around the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are rarely absent. Pupils enjoy learning alongside their friends, and they play cooperatively on the playground. In lessons, pupils listen well and focus on completing their work most of the time. However, if the work set for pupils is not matched to their needs, they become distracted and lose interest.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. In particular, they value the fact that staff go above and beyond what is expected of them to help their children.

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

Children get off to a great start in the early years. They thrive in a language-rich environment. Children enjoy learning new things every day and the staff give them lots of meaningful opportunities to do so. Staff know the children well and plan activities that build on what the children already know. Consequently, children connect new learning to what they have learned in the past. Staff maintain strong links with families throughout the year.

The school has considered the order of learning within and across year groups in many subjects. They have set out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn. This helps teachers to plan learning activities that build on what pupils have learned in the past. However, in a small number of subjects, there is more work to be done. In English, pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar in extended pieces of writing. Furthermore, too many pupils are not taking a pride in their work, and this is not being addressed. As a result, standards of handwriting and presentation are variable.

Staff possess secure subject knowledge and explain new learning clearly. They model subject-specific language accurately, which pupils use in their own explanations. However, the school is not routinely making checks on what pupils already know to inform the choice of learning activities. As a result, some activities

are too easy, and some are too difficult. This leads to pupils losing interest in their learning and limits how well they achieve.

The school is fostering a love of reading through high-quality texts in the English curriculum, regular storytimes, a well-stocked library and special events. Pupils enjoy reading and many have a favourite book. The teaching of phonics is well ordered and builds pupils' phonic knowledge over time. In most instances, staff teach phonics well because they have secure subject knowledge. Currently, the school is looking at how the organisation of phonics teaching can be improved further.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and the wider curriculum. Staff are quick to step in if a pupil needs extra support. However, where learning activities are not well matched to pupils' needs, this makes it difficult for pupils with SEND to access their learning.

Curriculum leaders possess the required subject knowledge and expertise to lead their subject areas. However, they have limited opportunities to make checks on how well their subject is being taught. As a result, they are not able to identify what is working well and address any areas that need to improve.

There is a strong level of pastoral care that is woven through the fabric of the school. Pupils know they are cared for, and they value this. Pupils have a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles. They value the roles and responsibilities they hold in school, such as prefects and librarians. Pupils know about the different types of families in their local community. They value the range of after-school clubs and trips that enrich their experiences in school, including the Year 6 residential trip.

Staff are proud to be a member of the Bursley team. Teachers say that workload is manageable, and they appreciate recent changes that support their work-life balance. Staff say that leaders are always available to listen to their concerns. Staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The writing curriculum is not yet fully developed. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as well as they could in writing. The school should continue to develop opportunities for pupils to apply their spelling, punctuation and grammar knowledge in sustained pieces of writing.
- The school are not using formative assessment effectively to inform teaching and the selection of learning activities. As a result, some learning activities are too

easy and some are too difficult, which limits pupils' progress through the curriculum. The school should use formative assessment to inform next steps in pupils' learning more consistently.

- In some subjects, the school is not making effective checks on how well the curriculum is being taught. In these instances, inconsistencies relating to the implementation of the curriculum remain and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should make effective checks on how well the curriculum is being delivered in all subjects, so that inconsistencies can be identified, and appropriate support put in place.
- The school is not ensuring that pupils take pride in their work across a wide range of subjects. As a result, the quality of handwriting and presentation in pupils' books is variable. The school should take action to ensure that pupils consistently take pride in their work across the curriculum.

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	138043
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294578
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	392
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Gribbin
Headteacher	Brian Wilkinson
Website	www.bursley.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club. This provision is operated by an external provider.
- The school is part of the Collective Vision MAT.
- The school has a nursery that admits three-year olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 this into account in their evaluation.

- 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.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the chair of the local governing committee and the chief executive officer of the MAT.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' behaviour, attendance, the early years and additional funding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Three separate groups of pupils accompanied inspectors on personal development learning walks around the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses received during the inspection. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation form, school development plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the local governing committee.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Plant	Ofsted Inspector
Alexandra Beardmore	Ofsted Inspector

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