

Inspection of a good school: Bure Valley School

Hungate Street, Aylsham, Norwich, Norfolk NR11 6JZ

Inspection dates:

2–3 October 2019

Outcome

Bure Valley School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and like their lessons. They said that they work hard at English and mathematics in the mornings and have a wide range of subjects in the afternoons. Pupils told me that teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and that they feel valued and appreciated. Breaktimes are planned so that pupils have the chance to take part in a wide variety of activities. Pupils play well together and are pleased that there are 'friendly face children' on the playground, who have been trained to make sure that no one is left out.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of opportunities they have to further their learning outside lessons. They told me about all the musical activities they can take part in and their pride in playing an instrument in the orchestra or singing at the O2 Arena. Other pupils talked about playing competitive matches for a school sports team or taking part in technology challenges.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school. They reported that bullying happens rarely and that when and if it does happen, it is dealt with quickly. If pupils are worried they can talk to an adult or go to a quiet room in school, where someone will talk to them. Pupils are grateful for the large playground and fields. They feel that this gives them the chance to spread out and do the things they like without affecting others.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Leaders' ambition is to support all pupils to do well in a wide range of subjects. They have developed a good balance between the amount of time spent on reading, writing and mathematics and providing opportunities to learn in other curriculum areas.

Plans for all subjects show teachers what it is that pupils should learn each term. Reading, writing and mathematics are all taught well, and most pupils learn what they should quickly. Reading is at the heart of school life. During any given day, pupils usually

get a number of chances to read. This may be quietly to themselves, as part of a taught lesson, or in the library. Pupils' faces lit up when I asked them about the stories that teachers read to them. They really enjoy these times, which are usually at the end of the day.

There is a clear plan to support pupils who find reading hard. Extra support is given quickly from the beginning of Year 3. Teachers and support staff are trained well to teach phonics, but on occasion give answers too quickly, rather than giving pupils time to think. Across all year groups, a number of pupils still struggle to spell words that they should be able to spell by their age. This is because the curriculum does not place enough emphasis on the learning of spellings and their use as a writing skill.

Mathematics is taught and led well so that the majority of pupils make good progress. This is particularly true in the area of mental arithmetic. For example, pupils enjoy trying to achieve the many times-table awards that are available through the 'Rockstar' challenge. The curriculum has been planned effectively in each year group so that learning progresses during the year and from one year to the next. This works well, except for the first term in Year 3.

Mathematics assessment of pupils does not ensure that gaps are picked up quickly. As a result, pupils do not catch up swiftly enough. Pupils of all ages apply their knowledge of mathematics well to problem-solving and reasoning activities. In other classes, learning sometimes slows when the teacher's subject knowledge is not strong enough to ensure that all groups of pupils do equally well.

In other curriculum subjects, lessons are planned and taught well. Leaders have thought about what they want pupils to learn and set this out clearly. Pupils can talk confidently about what they should know in subjects such as history, art or music. Music and sports are real strengths of the school. In music, every pupil learns an instrument for all four years of their time at school. The quality of education is effective in music, and pupils reach high levels of performance.

Overall, parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work.

Behaviour in class is good. Pupils pay close attention to the teacher and work hard when given activities to do.

Teachers consider the needs of all pupils when planning their lessons. They have received regular training on how to adapt lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This means that these pupils generally make good progress in class and throughout their time in school.

Leaders have ensured that staff workload implications are fully considered when introducing new policies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils spoke highly of the support they receive to deal with any concerns that they might have, so that they can focus better on lessons and their work. Weekly staff briefings are used to share appropriate information more widely and ensure that staff remain watchful. Staff have been trained well to look for signs of neglect or abuse. There is an effective system in place to record any concern, no matter how small. These concerns are followed up thoroughly by those senior leaders responsible for safeguarding. The school carries out all the required recruitment and other checks to ensure that anyone working at the school, or indeed visiting, is safe to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The generally strong curriculum in all subjects and across all year groups is not effectively planned for pupils at the beginning of Year 3. The content of the curriculum in mathematics does not provide appropriate opportunities for those pupils with gaps in their knowledge to receive the support that they need to get off to a good start. This is also true for pupils' ability to spell. Leaders need to ensure that the content taught in the first term of Year 3 is carefully planned to support all pupils as they make the transition from key stage 1.
- In some classes and activities, such as mathematics and the teaching of phonics, teachers need to further develop their subject knowledge so that they can support and challenge appropriately.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 4 February 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	120911
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10110266
Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jenny Youngs
Headteacher	Duncan Spalding (executive headteacher) Jamie Olney (head of school)
Website	www.burevalleyschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 February 2016

Information about this school

- Bure Valley School is part of the Aylsham Learning Federation, which was formed in July 2016 and consists of Bure Valley School, Aylsham High School and John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, class teachers and governors.
- During the inspection, the inspector focused on the quality of education in reading, mathematics and music. In addition, topic books were looked at to evaluate the quality of education in other curriculum subjects.
- Meetings were held with subject leaders in reading, mathematics and music, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and several groups of pupils.
- The inspector visited lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking to them about what it is like to learn in lessons and to be a part of Bure Valley School. There were no pupil responses to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire.

- The inspector checked the school's records for safeguarding and systems for safe recruitment. He spoke to pupils in class, in the library and at playtime about whether they felt safe at school and how frequent bullying is.
- Time was taken to observe pupils before school, at break and lunchtime, in class, during assembly and moving around the school.
- The inspector spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and took into account the views of 52 parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey; 39 written comments in this survey were also considered.
- The inspection took into account nine survey responses from staff.

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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