

Inspection of a good school: Bassingbourn Village College

South End, Bassingbourn, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5NJ

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

Bassingbourn Village College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who attend Bassingbourn Village College are proud to be part of their school. They understand the importance of looking after one another. They celebrate each other's successes and work together to overcome difficulties. They learn in a happy and safe environment, where they are challenged to achieve well.

Pupils are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the wider world and make positive contributions to the community. For example, the environmental club recently attended a youth COP27 climate conference. They experienced the challenges of global negotiations and shared their ideas on effecting change in their local communities.

Pupils are generally well mannered, polite and respectful. They understand the importance of listening to others, even if others' views are not the same as their own. Pupils consider it unacceptable to treat someone unkindly based on how they look, think or live. Bullying is rare and is dealt with well by adults when it happens.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all. It covers the breadth and depth of knowledge that is set out in the national curriculum. Specialist subject leaders have identified, in detail, what pupils need to know. They have carefully sequenced the order of learning. This means that, over time, pupils add additional layers of knowledge to what they already know.

Most teachers use this detailed planning to construct high-quality learning experiences, including clear explanations and structured examples. These help pupils to explore different topics in depth, gaining a secure understanding of what they are taught. However, some teachers spend too long on activities where pupils finish quickly. This means that pupils have to wait. Some get bored, lose interest and disrupt others. In a few instances, the activities, explanations and examples teachers use do not help pupils to

fully understand what they are learning about. Pupils in these cases can explain what they are doing, but they struggle to explain why.

Teachers skilfully check pupils' understanding of what they are learning about. They use this assessment to adapt their teaching. They identify pupils' misconceptions and address these before they can become embedded.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well provided for. Leaders have the same expectations for pupils with SEND as for all others. Leaders work with pupils and parents to develop plans that address pupils' individual needs. These plans are shared with all teachers. As a result, adaptations in the classroom are effective. Pupils access the same curriculum as their peers.

Most pupils read confidently and fluently. Staff work effectively with those who struggle with reading to catch up.

Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. This is due to most staff consistently applying the recently adopted system. However, a small number of staff do not apply agreed routines and procedures. If pupils have become distracted from the work, these staff do not ensure they refocus, so pupils continue to disrupt learning for longer than they should.

Leaders have created a personal development programme that helps pupils learn about and understand important issues, such as tolerance and the rule of law. They provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and these are well attended, including by disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. They help pupils to nurture existing interests, as well as encouraging pupils to take up something new.

Leaders prepare pupils well for the next stage of their lives. Pupils follow a well-planned careers programme from Year 7. This provides clear information and guidance on the full range of academic, technical and vocational options. Pupils make well-informed choices, successfully moving on after school.

Generally, staff feel supported and valued by leaders. Leaders consult staff and take their views into account when planning changes. Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to manage their workload.

Governors, trustees and trust executives work closely with leaders. They have a realistic view of the school's effectiveness. They support leaders effectively to implement the key areas for improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that high-quality training means that staff are constantly vigilant in keeping pupils safe. Staff are knowledgeable about the risks that pupils may encounter. If staff have a concern, they are quick to report it. Leaders' responses are swift. Leaders

ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need. This includes working closely with external agencies.

Pupils feel safe at school. They have learned how to keep themselves safe. They use this knowledge to look after their friends. They know that if they report a concern, it will be dealt with.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' sometimes do not teach in a way that matches the curriculum goals with pupils' needs. They sometimes use activities that are not linked well to the learning aims, and at times they do not use time well. The result of this is that some pupils do not make the progress through the curriculum that leaders intend. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use pedagogical approaches that are suitable to the subject content.
- Not all staff follow the behaviour guidelines and routines set out by leaders. This means that some pupils do not behave as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff consistently apply the agreed school policies and procedures to manage pupils' behaviour well.

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 February 2013.

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	137427
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10255164
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	677
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Lawton
Principal	Vickey Poulter
Website	www.bassingbournvc.net
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal took up post in 2019, having previously been the vice principal.
- The school is part of Anglian Learning.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, representatives of the local governing body, trustees and representatives of the trust executive team.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to other leaders about the curriculum, reviewed curriculum plans and visited lessons in other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to review safeguarding records. Inspectors reviewed the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. To further evaluate safeguarding, inspectors also spoke to governors, staff and pupils, and reviewed surveys.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils. Inspectors also took account of the 113 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To gather parents' views, inspectors reviewed the 119 responses and 80 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- To gather staff's views, inspectors spoke to several staff and reviewed the 50 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Dave Gibson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Robins

Ofsted Inspector

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