

Inspection of a good school: Bilbrook CofE (VC) Middle School

Bilbrook Road, Codsall, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire WV8 1EU

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

Bilbrook CofE (VC) Middle School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils' learning and for their personal development. They understand the barriers that pupils may face. Therefore, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are able to gain an education that prepares them extremely well for high school.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is exemplary. They have positive attitudes and are courteous. The school supports any pupil who does not behave according to expectations. This helps them to learn from their mistakes and make better choices. Leaders tackle bullying quickly and effectively on the rare occasion that it happens. Pupils say they feel safe.

The school's vision of letting 'your light shine' permeates everywhere. Pupils can choose from a wide variety of extra-curricular activities in sport and the arts. Leaders also consult with the pupils' learning council about how they learn. The learning council informs, and is central to, the shaping of developments in teaching and learning. This helps pupils to have a better understanding of how they learn.

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

Leaders have given careful thought about the knowledge and skills pupils need. They work well in collaboration with other teachers in the local learning partnership. This has enabled leaders to design a highly ambitious and interesting curriculum. In most subjects, it is very well planned and sequenced. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn, and they make good progress. However, this is not always the case. In a few subjects, the curriculum is less well organised, and pupils do not develop a strong depth of understanding.

Teachers consistently deliver the curriculum effectively. Clear routines are embedded so that pupils know how they are going to learn. Teachers model and explain new learning

extremely well. They engage pupils by asking questions that promote deep thinking. Teachers check pupils' understanding frequently. In lessons, pupils have opportunities to talk. This allows them to develop their fluency and vocabulary. They work together extremely well. They work through problem-solving and questions in groups prior to producing their own work. Pupils want to engage with the activities that teachers provide for them. They produce work of a high standard. They have lots of opportunities to construct extended pieces of writing. Teachers provide meaningful feedback that helps pupils know how to improve. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour.

The school has many pupils with SEND. Leaders' provision for these pupils is very effective. Leaders have provided staff with high-quality training. Teachers also have the right information to plan for the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, teachers can adapt learning well. This ensures that all pupils learn the same knowledge. Additional adults provide effective support so that pupils can participate in learning.

Reading is a priority. Pupils get lots of opportunities to read from a diverse range of books. They read from their reading book every day. In lessons, they often read texts aloud. Pupils who are at the early stages of reading or who have fallen behind receive appropriate phonics support to catch up.

Leaders value pupils' wider development highly. Pupils understand the importance of healthy relationships and good physical health. They know how to keep themselves safe online. All pupils comment that they really enjoy going on trips, including a recent visit to the Houses of Parliament. Pupils enjoy a comprehensive careers programme, which starts in Year 5. They learn about a range of different careers and visit various places of work. They also learn about the opportunities a university education provides.

Staff feel valued and well supported by leaders. They say that leaders care about their well-being. Leaders have also taken practical steps to manage staff workload. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything the school does. Leaders maintain a constant focus on the safety and well-being of pupils. The safeguarding team is very knowledgeable and knows pupils well. It is vigilant in making sure that pupils are safe.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This means that they know the signs that could indicate if a pupil is at risk. Staff follow the school's processes to report any concerns. Leaders then act quickly to support pupils. Leaders work with external agencies as necessary.

Governors have also received training on safeguarding. This includes training on safer recruitment processes when appointing new staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders acknowledge that the curriculum is not sufficiently well planned and sequenced in geography and history. This means that pupils are not able to deepen their knowledge well enough and make links to prior learning. Leaders need to ensure that newly appointed subject leaders are afforded the same opportunities as existing staff.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

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	124453
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10269451
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jessica Shulman
Headteacher	Thomas Wright
Website	www.bilbrookmiddle.com
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 May 2018

Information about this school

- The school is part of the South Staffordshire Learning Partnership, which supports staff collaboration and professional development in five local schools.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 executive headteacher, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, and pupils. The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and two governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including art, geography and history. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.

- Inspectors met with the special education needs coordinator and the leaders for reading and wider development.
- The lead inspector reviewed the support provided for pupils at an early stage of reading, wider pupils' development and careers provision.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised by inspectors, including leaders' plans to improve the school, their self-evaluation of the school's work and curriculum documents and pupils' work in other subjects. Minutes of local governing body meetings were also reviewed.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors considered the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe, the checks made to ensure safe recruitment and the quality of staff training. Inspectors also spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service, the online questionnaire, as well as the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nicola Walters, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Liz Todd

Ofsted Inspector

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