

Inspection of The Mary Bassett Lower School

Bassett Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 1AR

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school, especially to spend time with their friends at playtimes. They are respectful of each other and others' opinions. Pupils work to resolve any friendship issues sensibly. They know that they can go to any member of staff who will help them if they need it. Furthermore, they have their 'handy people', who they can turn to if they prefer.

Pupils are engaged, focused, and well behaved in lessons. They work well together and contribute enthusiastically to discussions. Due to recent changes in the curriculum, pupils enjoy the topics that they are learning about. They found their recent visit to Bletchley Park fascinating. They could see what they had learned about the Second World War first hand.

Pupils' achievements are improving. Part of this is due to the excitement they have for learning. They also know that staff have high expectations of them and work hard to achieve these. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of learning, particularly children in the early years.

Pupils know how to stay safe. They have talks on water safety and fire safety from external organisations. Pupils are clear on what they need to do to stay safe online.

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

There have been a considerable number of changes that have taken place at the school. The school has updated its vision and from this a new ambitious curriculum has been written. This curriculum starts in the early years. The school has ensured that the curriculum is relevant for its pupils. The curriculum is carefully organised so that it builds on pupils' previous knowledge. The school highlights the key vocabulary that pupils should know and be able to use. Teachers display this vocabulary prominently around the classrooms and refer to it regularly to help pupils remember it.

Subject leaders are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects. In most subjects, staff have good subject knowledge, which enables the pupils to learn more. However, staff do not have the detailed knowledge that they need of a few topics in some subjects. Therefore, staff cannot teach what is set out in these topics, or check pupils' understanding, accurately.

The provision in the early year's is exceptionally well prepared. Staff's strong knowledge of the children ensures that they choose learning activities carefully to build highly effectively on what children already know and can do. Staff have high expectations, and the children strive to achieve them, with much enjoyment along the way. Children know and follow routines exceptionally well, which helps them to develop their independence and confidence. Children leave Reception very well prepared for learning in Year 1.

The school has clear processes in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables pupils with SEND to get the right support so that they can access the curriculum. Staff have the expertise and guidance needed to adapt the curriculum according to pupils' individual needs. Pupils who need extra support to be ready to learn get the help they need to do so successfully.

Children start to learn letter sounds in Nursery. This prepares children well for learning phonics in Reception. Staff teach phonics effectively. Pupils read books that are well matched to their phonics knowledge. This helps them practise the sounds that they have been learning. The well-stocked library has a wide range of texts that the pupils can read during their weekly sessions. Pupils enjoy listening to snippets of different stories from different authors. They enjoy sharing texts with each other. Many pupils develop into confident, fluent and regular readers.

Routines and expectations are well established. Pupils know 'The Mary Bassett' way and ensure that they fulfil this in their daily school life. Any pupils who need it receive additional support with their behaviour. Pupils' attendance has improved, particularly for those who struggle to come regularly into school. The school has highlighted to parents and pupils the importance of regular attendance and the impact if pupils do not attend.

The school has a broad personal development programme. Pupils learn about the importance of diversity and to see everyone as unique. They develop their skills of problem-solving, teamwork, decision-making and listening as part of the curriculum. However, pupils have limited opportunities to take on responsibilities and contribute towards the school community using these skills.

Despite the number of changes the school has been through, staff well-being and workload have remained at the forefront of leaders' minds. Staff feel well supported in all aspects of their work. Governors are clear about the roles and responsibilities that they have. They support and challenge leaders to ensure the best for the pupils who attend the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff lack detailed subject knowledge of some topics. Staff, therefore, cannot teach the content of the topics in the detail required to ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of these topics. Staff also cannot check on pupils' learning as well as they should. The school must ensure that staff have the subject

knowledge they need to be able to teach all topics well and check pupils' understanding.

- Pupils have limited opportunities to take on some responsibilities, which would promote further their personal development. The school should provide greater opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities to further support their personal and character development.

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	109508
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10323593
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rob Merry
Headteacher	Hilary Wheeldon
Website	www.marybassett.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took on the role in January 2022.
- The school does not use any registered alternative providers.
- The school operates its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.

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 educational provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with governors and a local authority representative.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music, design technology and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- 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.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons, in the dining hall and at breaktimes. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff, to gather their views of the school. Inspectors also considered the 33 responses submitted to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspectors considered 43 responses, including free-text responses, to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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