

Cauldwell School

URN: 144528 | Inspected: 11 November 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Expected standard

Over time, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attain and progress well in reading and mathematics. Pupils develop a solid grasp of mental calculations as they move through the school years. This helps them to solve even more complex mathematical problems successfully. While consistently improving, there is more to be done to bring the quality of pupils' writing to the standard leaders expect. Pupils learn well across other curriculum areas. They develop a detailed knowledge that helps ready them for their next stages in learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well. They acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Older pupils who have not yet mastered skills in reading, for example, catch up well. Where some of these pupils join the school speaking English as an additional language, they quickly go on to become confident in their spoken English.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum across the school is well designed and implemented securely. Sensible and appropriate adaptations are made to support the differing needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerabilities. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in the subjects they teach. They explain new ideas and concepts to pupils clearly. Early reading is skilfully taught, leading to pupils learning to read well. Carefully tailored additional support is in place for those pupils who need further help with reading.

Pupils remember much of what they are taught in subjects such as history and geography, because they build new knowledge on what they already know. Regular checks on pupils' learning identify what they have remembered so that any gaps in learning can be addressed. Support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND removes any barriers to learning. Pupils keep up with learning and remember important knowledge across wider subjects in the curriculum. Leaders' work to fully embed the relatively new writing curriculum is well underway. That said, there remains more to do to ensure that the teaching of writing is as high quality as that in other subjects.

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Early years Needs attention

Leaders have accurately identified that children would benefit from more high-quality interactions during their time learning through play. This is because there are times when some children do not receive the interaction they need to support and guide their learning or develop their language. While children get off to a positive start with their early reading skills, and they quickly learn new sounds and begin to read words, the expectations of what they need to do in terms of writing are sometimes not well matched. Children can sometimes be asked to complete writing tasks when they do not have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. Children quickly develop a sense of belonging when they start at the school. This is because staff get to know children and families well. Leaders ensure that staff establish familiar routines, using picture cues to help children who speak English as an additional language to understand what will happen now and what to do next. This means children settle quickly in this warm and positive environment. Children develop their physical skills using the large apparatus outside, creating obstacle courses and developing perseverance as they practise balancing over them.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils attend a school where each is seen as an individual and many pupils speak different languages. They delight in working, socialising and playing with friends across the school day. Happiness and kindness shine through in all that pupils do. They also love sharing and celebrating their own backgrounds and cultures with their friends. This leads to a well-established culture of respect, where pupils understand one another's similarities and differences. Pupils work hard, trying their best in lessons, and their attendance is high. Teachers make learning interesting, which helps pupils to enjoy their time in class. On the whole, pupils achieve well. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, many are ready for secondary school. Pupils' individual needs are well understood by staff. Consequently, any barriers that a pupil may face are reduced. For example, a significant number of pupils join the school mid-year, many speaking little or no English. These pupils are skilfully supported to learn English quickly, through the school's well-established programme. Children in the early years benefit enormously from warm and caring relationships with adults. However, adults do not always have the knowledge they need when talking with children about their learning. The youngest children are sometimes asked to write words and phrases for which they do not yet have the phonic knowledge to be successful. Opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons are rich and plentiful. Whether performing poetry at the local festival of speech and drama, competing in sports competitions or tending to their own vegetables, pupils play an active role in the school and local community. Leaders design these opportunities based on their deep knowledge of the school and local community. This ensures all pupils benefit enormously, whatever their background.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to prioritise providing staff in the early years with professional development to improve the frequency and quality of interactions that adults have with children.
- In the early years, leaders should ensure writing opportunities build on children's phonics knowledge and physical skills, enabling them to write with increasing confidence, control and accuracy.
- Leaders should continue to ensure teaching enables pupils to understand and apply the writing process

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confidently, strengthening their grammar, spelling and composition skills across the curriculum.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have created and maintained a highly inclusive culture in the school. This leads to the school's day-to-day practices around inclusion being of a high quality. As a result, the individual needs of pupils are well understood and met. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive well-tailored support to help them learn and develop well. Leaders keep a sharp eye on how well pupils with SEND are doing, making adaptations or changes to their provision as needed. Disadvantaged pupils receive equally high-quality support. Leaders' well-honed assessment practices are put to work when pupils join the school mid-year, often speaking little or no English. Leaders swiftly find out what these pupils know and can do. This means there is an accurate picture of what these pupils need in order for them to learn and develop well. Highly effective engagement with families, and external agencies, ensures that the right support is provided at the right time. Likewise, the school's work with pupils who are young carers means they are extremely well supported. These pupils benefit greatly from a range of opportunities to share their experiences with others in a similar position.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders act with great integrity in all of their work. Pupils sit at the heart of their decision-making. Leaders know the aspects of the school that are working well, and those aspects that need further development. Where leaders identify issues that need improvement, they take the right action at the right time. For example, while there remains more to do, the work to improve pupils' writing is bearing fruit. Similarly, leaders know that some aspects of the provision in the early years need to be improved. They have already taken the right steps to improve, and their work to refine this is ongoing and effective. Staff are proud to work in the school. They expect the very best from pupils, whatever their background or individual needs, and these high expectations flow from leaders. Leaders take care of staff's wellbeing and workload. Staff, including teachers in the early stages of their careers, receive effective professional learning. This helps them to continue to improve and sharpen their practice. Relationships with parents and carers and the wider community are hugely positive. The school is a central part of the local community. These relationships are used very well to provide support and guidance for pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged or who have other additional needs. Trustees and members of the local advisory board work closely to provide appropriate challenge and support for leaders. They carry out their statutory duties well. Needs attention

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

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An understanding of cultural diversity is a theme that runs through the school. Pupils learn about, and celebrate, a range of different cultures. The school's International Week provides pupils with the chance to share, for example, food, cultural dress and religious beliefs with their classmates. Rich opportunities such as these enable pupils to learn about and understand the differences between themselves and others. This understanding leads to the harmonious feel within the school, where all pupils are valued and celebrated. Pupils experience a coherent, thoughtfully structured personal, social and health education programme. This programme builds their knowledge and confidence year by year. They learn about different types of relationships and how they change as they grow up, at an age-appropriate level. Older pupils talk openly and maturely about sensitive topics. Pupils are empathetic towards the challenges their peers face. The young carers club and wellbeing club provide very effective pastoral support. Pupils who attend these clubs learn the importance of managing their own mental health and how socialising and fresh air can be of benefit. Pupils understand that exercise is important in keeping them physically and mentally healthy. The wider opportunities on offer for pupils are plentiful. Leaders use their in-depth knowledge of pupils' needs to ensure that opportunities are well designed to provide high-quality experiences. Older pupils who are 'reading buddies' delight in these roles. Those who learn to play brass instruments take great pride in their performances. Pupils on the eco-council make a real difference to the levels of recycling and energy use in school. These opportunities, along with many more, help raise pupils' aspirations. They are carefully guided to see what is on offer in the wider world as they grow older. Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders take a multipronged approach to securing high attendance. They make the school a place that pupils value, where positive relationships encourage them to attend every day. Leaders work closely with families to overcome barriers to attendance, providing practical and pastoral support where needed. Their visible presence at the school gates each morning ensures that there are high levels of punctuality. Leaders are relentless in their drive for pupils to attend well. As a result, leaders' actions are securing high attendance. The school's approach to behaviour supports pupils to concentrate very well in lessons and to treat others with courtesy. Leaders' actions ensure that the high expectations they set are realised in practice. This creates a calm and welcoming school environment where praise abounds, and bullying is rare. Classrooms have a distinctly purposeful, studious atmosphere. Over time, this transforms pupils' behaviour, enabling them to take greater responsibility for themselves and their learning. Social times are abuzz with fun and smiles. Pupils enjoy one another's company and benefit from the warm relationships they have with staff and their friends.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/cauldwell-school-bedford>