

Bedford Road Primary Academy

URN: 150474 | Inspected: 09 December 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 Needs attention

Despite notable improvements in early reading outcomes, achievement in reading, writing and mathematics published outcomes at the end of key stage 2, including for disadvantaged pupils, is typically below national averages. The school has rightly focused on raising achievement within reading, and this is bearing fruit. Across year groups, pupils now generally achieve close to national expectations. They develop fluency in reading, which enables most pupils to successfully access the ambitious school curriculum. This supports many pupils to develop a depth of knowledge across subjects. However, the experience older pupils have had during their time at school means some have significant gaps in important knowledge, such as their ability to fluently recall key number facts. The school is supporting pupils to fill gaps in learning, but for some older pupils, this catch up is not happening quickly enough.

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

Pupils are excited to learn at Bedford Road Primary Academy. After a period of change, pupils are embracing the school's renewed focus on high ambition and improving achievement. Some pupils are beginning to achieve better over time. Outcomes in early reading are a particular example of this. However, there are some older pupils who have not secured key knowledge securely. This acts as a barrier to their achievement across the curriculum and is reflected in published outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Pupils are starting to catch up and close the gaps in their learning, but there is more work to do to ensure older pupils consistently achieve well academically across the curriculum. Pupils know and live out the school values in and around school. For example, they understand the importance of showing resilience in their learning and demonstrate this in their approach to tasks in lessons. Pupils have positive relationships with adults in school. They feel safe and are well cared for by staff. More pupils now attend school regularly. Behaviour in class is calm, orderly, and conducive to learning. If bullying occurs, leaders deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils enjoy school and know the value of acquiring new knowledge and skills for the future. Pupils make the right choices to ensure their learning time is maximised. They socialise happily with their peers in the playground, enjoying a range of physical activities. Roles of responsibility, alongside the broad offer of clubs and trips, are valued by pupils. All pupils have the chance to experience sports, art, and music clubs. Class ambassadors eagerly tell visitors about their learning, while the newly appointed head boy and head girl act as excellent role models to their peers. Pupils become confident leaders in these roles and make a meaningful contribution to school life.

Next steps

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- Leaders should ensure that staff have the expertise to address gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively, particularly for disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics.
- Leaders should continue to refine and develop the support teachers receive to help them adapt the curriculum to meet the specific needs of some pupils in class.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school, supported by the trust, has worked at pace to put an ambitious curriculum in place. The curriculum is precise and has clear end points. It starts in early years and sets out the knowledge pupils are intended to learn year on year. Significant training and support have enabled teachers to teach the curriculum as leaders intend. This is working well. Teachers explain ideas clearly and demonstrate suitable subject knowledge in their explanations during lessons. The teaching of reading is a particular strength. The school has focused on improving both teaching and assessment in this area. Trained staff teach reading well and check pupils' understanding carefully. This means pupils are able to keep up with their peers when they find something difficult. In some subjects, the approach to checking what pupils know is at an earlier stage of development. At times, the support put in place in these subjects to address gaps in pupils' knowledge lacks precision. Leaders are working with staff to develop their practice and expertise in this area.

Early years

Expected standard

Children make a positive start in early years. They learn the rules and expectations set by staff right from the start. The school communicates effectively with parents and carers, which helps children settle into school life successfully.

There is a real focus on children securing key knowledge from the outset. Daily handwriting sessions set clear expectations for letter formation from the start. Reading is also a clear priority. Phonics is taught well and helps children learn their letter sounds and develop a positive view of reading. Children learn to read quickly. Any children who need extra practice are identified and supported effectively to help them keep up with their peers. Interactions between staff and children are plentiful and caring. Many of these interactions are effective in moving children's learning forward. Children have lots of time to practise their learning through the carefully planned activities within the setting. They develop effective learning behaviours, learning to communicate and socialise well with their peers as part of the activities provided. Typically, children leave the early years suitably prepared for the demands of Year 1.

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Inclusion

Expected standard

The school understands the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils. It works hard to break down any barriers these pupils face and involve disadvantaged pupils in all aspects of school life. When necessary, the school proactively engages with external agencies to get these pupils the support they need. The school has suitable expertise to accurately identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have received appropriate training to support pupils with different needs. Plans are in place which identify the barriers to learning these pupils face. Targets are set and reviewed in a timely manner. These targets are typically precise and the support pupils with SEND receive generally helps them to access the same learning as their classmates. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have their knowledge checked on arrival. Many of these pupils access learning in class with only minor adaptations. For those pupils who arrive with a limited knowledge of the English language, the school identifies their level of understanding. Additional targeted support is provided for these pupils to catch up and learn alongside their peers. The school has a targeted pupil premium plan which identifies the barriers these pupils typically face. For example, the focus on improving attendance is highly appropriate, and disadvantaged pupils are now attending more regularly following this work.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

The school became part of the trust in January 2024. Since that time, leaders have made significant improvements to the school, especially with regard to safeguarding, behaviour and the curriculum. They are unwavering in their drive and ambition to raise standards. Staff have responded positively to the changes leaders have made. Leaders have duly considered staff wellbeing during this time of change, which staff appreciate. Leaders have ensured that staff have had the necessary support to improve how pupils learn. Staff value the coaching and professional development which leaders have offered them in order to fulfil their roles. This is leading to improvements in pupils' outcomes across the school, and better provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The trust provides effective oversight of the school. The school and the trust have a clear understanding of the

next steps

on the improvement journey. Trustees have ensured that school governance has also been strengthened. Governors are developing a clear understanding of their role. The trust and trustees are effective at holding the school to account and also seek external assurances for how well the school is performing. Leaders are very mindful of the need to continue engaging with parents and carers. This is to ensure that they know and are assured of how well the school is operating.

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Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school recognises the importance of developing pupils more widely. It has put in place a well-considered personal development programme which helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The personal, social and health education curriculum is designed well. It prioritises the topics that leaders deem most important for pupils. For example, pupils revisit content about internet safety every term, as the school recognises how important this knowledge is in the modern world. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, display sound knowledge of both how to behave online and how to react if they ever feel unsafe. The school contributes positively to the local community, such as the school choir singing to older generations at a local care home. Pupils understand the importance of fundamental British values. They demonstrate tolerance and respect when considering people's differences. Pupils visit different places of worship to further broaden their knowledge of religions and beliefs. Alongside the personal development programme, the whole-school curriculum is designed to help pupils understand how individuals who have faced adversity can achieve success in their chosen fields. Pupils are exposed to powerful voices and stories that broaden their horizons and develop knowledge of the world around them. The curriculum also promotes understanding of protected characteristics, ensuring pupils appreciate diversity and inclusion. For example, learning about the Suffragette movement is integrated with the religious education curriculum, providing links that deepen pupils' knowledge of equality. Pupils' wellbeing is also a key consideration. Pupils know the trusted adults they can speak to if they ever feel anxious or worried. Daily 'Mind Up' sessions give pupils the chance to share how they are feeling and reflect on their own mental health. Pupils who need additional support are aided by trained staff in school.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance rates across different groups of pupils. As part of this work, they have ensured the school is a welcoming place for pupils and their families. Pupils now generally attend school well. Leaders recognised that some disadvantaged pupils were missing too much school. An unrelenting focus upon breaking down the barriers to school attendance for these pupils has had the desired impact. Disadvantaged pupils now attend school more regularly than they have in the past. Overall attendance is close to the national averages. Leaders have set clear and consistent expectations about how they expect pupils to behave. Built on a desire to maximise learning time, staff apply these expectations well and have clear routines which pupils know and follow. This means classrooms are productive and learning proceeds with minimal disruption. Around school, pupils get along well. The chance to be active in their play is appreciated by pupils who enjoy sports and games in a competitive but supportive manner. Other activities allow pupils who prefer something calmer to enjoy these times too. The school is a positive environment where pupils can learn and feel safe.

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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/bedford-road-primary-academy-bedford>