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Ofsted inspection questions and answers

This document captures the questions that have arisen in our parent community since the Ofsted inspection at Busbridge Infant School. It reflects both questions that were sent in to the school via email, as well as questions that were asked at the Information Evening for parents on Wednesday 24th October.

A dedicated email address was established in the immediate wake of the Ofsted report being published (ofstedinspection@busbridge-infant.surrey.sch.uk). That account has now been closed. If you wish to share further reflections, questions or concerns, please do so via the usual means for contacting the school at info@busbridge-infant.surrey.sch.uk.

We are very grateful to parents for so actively engaging with the Ofsted report and its implications. There are a lot of questions covered on the following pages. To help you navigate them, they have been grouped around the following themes:

- The Ofsted process and the school's overall response
- Safeguarding
- Curriculum and personal development
- Phonics and reading
- Academic results at Busbridge Infant School
- Pace of improvement
- Funding and resources
- Governance
- Staff changes, management and leadership
- Reinspection, monitoring and assurance
- Becoming an academy
- Parent communications and involvement
- Prospective parents and reputation

In some cases, questions that are very similar in nature have been merged together. We hope though that you will still find responses to the questions that you asked and that this document will provide further clarity. We thank you for your understanding that we cannot answer questions about individual members of staff or the governing body; however, you will find broader questions about staff and governance in the relevant sections.

The Ofsted process and the school's overall response

What happens during an Ofsted inspection?

During an inspection, inspectors observe lessons, check records and gather a range of evidence to inform their judgements, including speaking to staff, governors, pupils and parents and scrutinising pupils' work. This is the first time that Busbridge Infants has received a full inspection since 2007 because, until recently, schools rated as 'outstanding' were exempt from routine inspection. Ofsted introduced a new inspection framework in 2019 which places less emphasis on test results than previous inspections did and more emphasis on schools' curriculum planning and pupils' broader development. The new framework is generally regarded as setting tougher expectations, with far fewer schools expected to achieve an 'outstanding' outcome. Busbridge Infant School is the only local school currently to have been inspected under the new framework.

Why has the school been rated inadequate?

Ofsted inspectors found that the school's safeguarding procedures were not fully effective. Unfortunately, when safeguarding is found to be not effective, a school automatically receives an inadequate judgement for leadership and management and an inadequate judgement overall. The school received two independent reviews carried during the last academic year by education professionals on behalf of Surrey County Council and the Godalming Learning Partnership – both of these were very positive about the school and neither identified any cause for concern. However, Ofsted is operating under a new framework with tougher expectations and it's clear that the school needs to improve to meet those expectations.

Does the school accept the Ofsted result? Will you be appealing it?

The school and its governors fully accept the findings in the Ofsted report and have taken immediate action to address them, as well as developing robust plans to restore the quality and reputation of Busbridge Infant School. We will not be appealing the report. We recognise that there are also many positive aspects about the school and people's experiences of it, which we will look to retain and strengthen as we move forwards.

What is the ambition for the school now?

The immediate priority has been to address the effectiveness of our safeguarding procedures and practices, so that Ofsted could no longer find the school's leadership and management to be inadequate. Over the next academic year, we are confident that the plans we have to develop Busbridge Infant School will return it to being a good school. The staff and governors are ambitious for the school and are working hard to ensure its reputation for outstanding provision, facilities and outcomes is quickly restored.

Will you share the detailed action plan with parents, and if so, when? When will parents hear more about the actions being implemented?

The Action Plans are working documents which will contain sensitive information and they will therefore not be published formally. Instead it is the intention to share the identified priorities and updates through the Busbridge Bulletin.

What are the top priorities for change?

The highest priorities for change are: safeguarding, phonics and reading, curriculum design, and developing the provision of personal (social, moral, spiritual and cultural) development. This is to address the urgent focus following the Ofsted inspection in order to move the school out of an inadequate judgement. Some of these priorities which need addressing will take longer to implement and embed, for example changing and embedding the curriculum design.

What are the greatest challenges you face? What can parents do to assist?

The greatest challenge is maintaining the school's excellent reputation amongst the community. It is also a challenge to encourage prospective parents to name the school as their first choice. Existing parents can help to support this by reassuring them how happy and how well their children are doing. It's a very exciting time.

As Busbridge Infant School develops, can it benefit from good practice in other schools?

Yes. Busbridge Infant School will soon become part of a Multi-Academy Trust, which brings the benefit of shared learning and expertise across a family of schools. Busbridge Infant School will also have much to offer this group, and the sharing of good practice will very much be a two-way process. The school also continues to be part of the Godalming Learning Partnership - a federation of local schools which share expertise and learning.

Safeguarding

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the general term used for the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. It means protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development, ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Why did Ofsted find that safeguarding is not effective?

Ofsted found that a small number of child protection files had not been kept, over time, to the standard to which they would expect and that there was not a sufficiently well

embedded understanding amongst staff of the importance of noting and referring on concerns about pupils in their care. Ofsted also commented that staff's safeguarding training was not up to date as there was not enough evidence of case studies shared as part of the session for staff to learn from - referring to an omission from the most recently delivered training on 1 September 2021.

What are you doing to address the safeguarding issues? Can we expect honesty from the school about the fact that what was inadequate was both safeguarding procedures and staff training?

We have already taken prompt action to address the issues found and safeguarding is our top priority. The Local Authority (Surrey County Council) has worked in partnership with the school to produce a Safeguarding Action Plan which is now reviewed weekly. Further quality assurance systems are operating on behalf of Surrey County Council to ensure that both Mr Heatley and the Local Authority are held to account.

Addressing the issues involves: improving procedures, ensuring staff are adequately trained, and leadership embedding a robust culture around safeguarding. We acknowledge that safeguarding procedures were not robust enough with respect to recording and sharing safeguarding concerns, and the school has put in place immediate measures to address this – including investing in a safeguarding software package (CPOMS) making all safeguarding policies and procedures more accessible for all staff and rapidly reviewing current records.

There was an issue with respect to the quality of the training provided to staff at the start of term – it was refresher training, when in fact staff would have benefitted from more in-depth training (which was subsequently implemented on 1 November); and there was also a criticism of the training that the Local Authority provided the school with, which did not reflect new aspects of the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance. The training on 1 November fully covered these new aspects of guidance and all staff at the school have also read the up-to-date guidance. Training will continue to remain a top priority. Finally, and importantly, leadership is strengthening the culture around safeguarding, through modelling, coaching and performance management.

Why has safeguarding training not been adequate?

All staff have been trained – annually and with updates throughout the year. The success of this training has also been tested. However, our systems and processes have been enhanced to make sure everyone is confident in their role in particular aspects of safeguarding practices and procedures, such as completing forms to capture low level concerns, so that we are able to build up a comprehensive picture – because no single person holds all the pieces to the puzzle.

Safeguarding training continues to be a high priority and further training is planned to ensure bespoke training for staff distinguishes the difference between low-level concerns in the playground linked to behaviour and low-level concerns that are linked to safeguarding.

All governors receive safeguarding training relevant to governance. This is up to date.

When was your safeguarding policy last updated?

In line with statutory guidance our safeguarding policy was last updated in November 2021. The latest policy is on our website. Associated policies such as Whistleblowing, First Aid, Supporting Medical Conditions, and the Administration of Medicine are also up to date and will continue to be updated according to government guidelines.

Who are the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)?

The role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Child Protection Lead is a position that every organisation that works with children and young people needs to have. At Busbridge Infant School Mr Heatley is currently the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and Mrs Melland is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, however this will change and Mrs Melland will be the named DSL and Mr Heatley will be the DDSL once all training has been completed this term.

What are the safeguarding arrangements for after school clubs?

External providers (such as SCL, Boogie Pumps and Waverley Harriers) have their own safeguarding policies that the school keeps on file. The external providers ask parents for contact details so they are able to contact parents in the case of emergency after the school office is closed. Their contact details are available to parents when they sign up for clubs. Teacher led clubs are covered by BIS safeguarding policy.

Curriculum and personal development

What are your priorities for improving the curriculum? Can you say more about what is wrong with the curriculum currently?

The curriculum is not being taught incorrectly. The purpose of a school curriculum involves everything that happens in the school day for children. The knowledge and skills that children are learning will be delivered through more exciting ways where the children are immersed in the topic. The way a teacher delivers learning needs to be more ambitious and involve greater opportunities for children to engage in learning and be 'in the cockpit of learning' so that they can experience greater challenges and be able to access learning challenges more independently.

Is it possible to make the curriculum more ambitious without putting pressure on the children? Will there be more homework?

Yes. Making the curriculum more ambitious does not mean the children will be under additional pressure. Instead it means that children will listen to a variety of texts around a theme and understand that the development of skills builds upon previous skills that have

been learned. Children will be able to learn more about the techniques that authors and illustrators use and of course match their sounds they are learning to their reading books when practising at home. There will be changes to how teachers share their plans for a learning topic and you will be sent a copy of this new 'curriculum map' for the learning expected that term. It is planned that this information will begin to change after February half-term 2022.

What is the school's approach towards streaming and differentiation? How do you ensure that children are sufficiently challenged and encouraged to reach their potential, as well as supported when they need to be?

'Differentiation' refers to a wide range of strategies that teachers employ to teach a diverse group of children, with diverse learning needs, in the same classroom. Revised planning will ensure that all children receive different levels of support at different times. There is a difference between understanding and grouping children as a way of making sure the challenge is set appropriately (i.e. 'differentiating'), and 'streaming' children which implies that once the assessment have happened a child remains in that group until they have made enough progress to move into another group. Teachers will be evaluating their teaching more than before so that they can better understand the impact it has on children's learning and make quicker changes according to the needs of the children's next step. Teachers are in the process of managing this change and are aware that the current grouping arrangements need revising.

How do you plan to improve children's personal development?

Assembly themes will continue to follow the school's values and will be planned more effectively. Teachers will also be scheduled to model the values and lead assemblies. These changes have already happened with the revised version of Celebration Assembly.

Planning will also address themes such as recognising diversity in the lives of people living in Modern Britain and British Values will be more evident across the school and classes so that they are part of the plans and topics children are learning.

Phonics and reading

What are your priorities for improving phonics and reading?

Mr Heatley and the English Lead, Natasha Sollufi, have now attended training for the programme Little Wandle Letters and Sounds. This will be the new Statutory Synthetic Programme approved by the DfE that will provide fidelity to one scheme. There are implications for staff training and information sharing which are currently underway and you will be advised of the details of parent workshops soon.

The action plan for the Quality of Education is monitored by though a School Improvement Partner who is called Louise Yarnell and her role is to quality assure and check rapid progress is being made. The first review meeting is at the end of this term. Plans to audit the library and replace stocks with new books are underway but as you can appreciate this

is a large process. Thank you to many of you who have offered to help. There will be new books purchased to ensure that, in the Spring Term, higher quality books are used to support the teachers' planning of topics for the children.

Will there be a single phonics scheme going forwards?

Yes. All schools are required to adopt a single phonics scheme by September 2022; we will be doing this immediately at Busbridge Infant School. We are in the final stages of purchasing Little Wandle Letters and Sounds (<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk>).

When will we start to see a change in how scheme reading books are allocated? (i.e. matched to the sound being learnt; not the same book they have had before; at the correct level)

Little Wandle Letters and Sounds provides the opportunity to match books to the sounds being learned. A meeting, to discuss the school's requirements, has been booked so that we receive clarity on the timescales for when the stocks arrive in the Spring Term, and the books can start coming home.

How frequently do children read in school and will this change?

Teachers will be delivering planned reading sessions as part of the new Little Wandle programme and will be focused on delivering the relevant skills prescribed by the scheme. There will no longer be individual time dedicated to hearing readers, as is the current arrangement, as this was a criticism of Ofsted.

When will new books be purchased?

New books will be purchased at the same time as implementing the single phonics scheme (i.e. in the next few weeks). The school is also reviewing and refreshing its wider stock of books (including 'choosy' books that children take home to read for pleasure).

Academic results at Busbridge Infant School

What are the school's latest academic results (for phonics and KS1)?

The Government cancelled statutory assessments in primary schools in 2021, due to the Covid pandemic. This included the end of Key Stage 1 test (done towards the end of Year 2). The Phonics Screening Assessment typically done at the end of Year 1 for the 2020-21 academic year was postponed and carried out with this cohort recently. Although the results of this are not published formally yet, 98% of children in Year 2 met the expected score of 32 or more out of a possible 40.

Are the academic outcomes of children independently assessed?

Teachers attend moderation sessions with local schools who discuss the decisions made by each other and together agree or challenge the decision. This term, all the evidence that was shared amongst other professionals from the schools within the GLP, was confirmed to be accurate judgements. The Local Authority also carry out a moderation schedule and we are yet to be advised whether we will be selected.

Pace of improvement

How can we be confident that the school will improve rapidly, especially for the children who are there now?

The school is now subject to considerable scrutiny, following its Ofsted inspection. This includes, for example, weekly monitoring of the progress on safeguarding action plan as well as close monitoring of the wider Ofsted action plan including curriculum development every 2-4 weeks. The school and governors are absolutely committed to driving rapid improvement and ensuring the best outcomes for current pupils, as well as future intakes. The School Improvement Partner will be conducting monitoring visits to ensure the delivery of the Action Plan in response to the Quality of Education. There are progress meetings due this term to ensure that teachers have correctly identified the next support and intervention for children. These meetings are with senior leaders and support partners as appropriate. These meetings will provide Senior Leaders with the plans which teachers have to support those children who require additional intervention.

Funding and resources

How will Ofsted's judgement affect funding for the school?

The Local Authority has provided an immediate additional £8,000, in addition to a range of further support and expertise for Mr Heatley. Generally, a school's funding allocation is determined by the number of allocated places that are filled. If we have 60 pupils on roll in each Year group, we will be fully funded. If we don't, our funding will be reduced proportionally. This is therefore where the Ofsted judgement could adversely affect the school's funding.

How will funding be changed when the school joins a Multi-Academy Trust?

The school is currently funded through the Local Authority, and this is based on pupil numbers. When the school joins an Academy, funding will go directly from the Department for Education to the school. Every MAT has a central team that supports schools in the MAT (for example, for HR and school improvement), and schools in the MAT provide a percentage of funding to cover the expense of this. The percentage charge varies from Trust to Trust. However, as a rule of thumb, these central costs will be broadly in line with those for centrally bought services from the Local Authority.

Will the PTA provide additional resources to support the school, for example, to acquire new books? Why does the PTA not spend its money faster?

Busbridge Infant School is incredibly fortunate to benefit from a very successful PTA. Last year, the PTA provided around £17,000 worth of funds and resources to the school. The PTA has a policy to keep only £2,000 in reserve, and is currently working with the school to see where it can support improvements through funding further resources.

Governance

Was there a failure of governance at Busbridge Infant School? How are you ensuring the governing body is fit for purpose, and will better balance challenge with support moving forwards?

The role of governors is to take a strategic view and hold leaders to account for educational and financial performance, which in practice means a mix of challenge and support. Performing this role includes reviewing performance, scrutinizing plans and budgets, shaping policies and practice, undertaking visits, triangulating evidence using external expertise and by getting the views of parents and children.

In relation to safeguarding, this has meant looking at policies, procedures, training delivered and the results of training audits, as well as undertaking termly audits to assess policy implementation and reviewing external assurance reports. Governors are not allowed to look at the child protection files for confidentiality reasons. Ofsted inspectors accepted at the time of the inspection that there were no red flags governors could have seen.

The governing body is nevertheless determined to rectify the weaknesses found in safeguarding and to develop collectively, including reviewing how it increases the level of constructive challenge going forward. As part of that process a National Leader of Governance is working with the governing body. It is also subject to monitoring by Surrey County Council as part of this process.

How can we understand more about governance at Busbridge Infant School?

The pages on governance on the school's [website](#) detail governor responsibilities, who the school governors are, when meetings are taking place and how to contact governors and access meeting minutes.

Staff changes, management and leadership

What are the plans to address staff effectiveness, motivation and morale?

There are formal performance management processes in place for all staff which will address staff effectiveness and recognise achievements. Following the Directive Academy Order, there will be a need to review the existing staffing model so that the needs of children are prioritised and this will inform any decisions to deploy staff as appropriate.

Reinspection, monitoring and assurance

When will Ofsted return to reinspect Busbridge Infant School? Are there any limitations to how well we could do?

No date has been set for when Ofsted will return. Ofsted usually carries out regular (shorter) monitoring inspections of inadequate schools. The timing will depend on the timescales for Busbridge Infant School joining a MAT. Once the school joins MAT as a sponsored academy, there is usually a period of at least a couple of years before the school is reinspected so as to allow the MAT time to support the necessary improvements to the school. There is no reason in theory at this stage why Busbridge Infant School could not receive the highest ratings. The latest time by which Ofsted will return is 30 months (i.e. April 2024).

How will we get assurance in the meantime that the school is improving?

The Ofsted inspection report has triggered a high level of external monitoring of Busbridge Infant School, and whilst this is not resulting in published reports, this should provide some assurance that the school is being held to account for the pace and quality of its improvement. Parents and carers will also continue to receive updates on the improvements being made.

Becoming an academy

Why does the school now have to become an academy?

Current government policy means that any school that becomes inadequate must join a multi-academy trust (MAT). This is a legal requirement. Currently 37% of all primary schools (and 78% of all secondary schools) are academies, and the Government's intention is that all schools will be academies within the next 2 years.

What does becoming an academy and being supervised by a Multi-Academy Trust mean?

Academies receive funding directly from the government and are run by an academy trust. They have more control over how they do things than community schools, for example they do not have to follow the national curriculum and can set their own term times. Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are groups of academies that have come together to form a charitable company, with a single group of 'members' (who have an overview of the governance arrangements) and a single board of trustees. Even as part of a MAT individual schools remain as separate entities, with separate names and identities.

What are the timeframes around becoming an academy and how does the process work?

The process of converting Busbridge Infant School is underway. Some MATs are identified as 'sponsor' MATs which means that the Department for Education recognises their ability to support underperforming schools to improve. In due course the Department for Education

will identify a sponsor MAT for us to join. Because we are directed by the Education Secretary and the Regional School's Commissioner the decision is made for us as to which Trust we join. This process can take several months as there are strict processes which have to be followed. We will keep parents informed as the process develops.

What are the benefits, as well as the downsides, of becoming part of a Multi-Academy Trust?

Being part of a MAT can bring huge benefits – it will allow us to be part of a strong family of schools and draw from their capacity and experience. Inevitably, the MAT will have a degree of influence over how particular aspects of the school are managed, such as complying with agreed policies of the Trust. On balance, it is likely to bring significant benefits to the school at this time in its improvement journey.

Parent communications and involvement

How will the school's improvement targets and progress be regularly communicated to parents?

The Action Plans are not available as public documents due to the fact that sensitive information is contained within them. However, updates on the Action Plan targets and successes will be shared through the Busbridge Bulletin which is scheduled to be published monthly. This new method of communication will play a key role in keeping parents abreast of improvements as they are planned and implemented.

Can we have better communications on what children will be learning each week, and how we can support them with their learning at home?

The school welcomes suggestions for improvements and has received a few ideas about strengthening communications about what children will be learning each week, so that parents can better support their learning at home. We will be reviewing this in the new year.

Prospective parents and reputation

What is the school doing to reassure prospective parents that Busbridge Infant School is a good choice?

We believe that there is much to be celebrated about Busbridge Infant School and many reasons why prospective parents should consider choosing it for their child. We have happy, bright and lively children (98% of parents agree that their child is happy at school - Ofsted Parent View survey). We have rich resources, including a new order for furniture for the Early Years Areas which will ensure the environment is improved and more aesthetically pleasing because areas will be better defined. We have passionate, experienced staff who care deeply about the children. We have a new Headteacher, with the drive, determination

and experience to make Busbridge Infant School excellent in all areas. We have extensive outdoor learning spaces, including a Woodland Area, and a brand new indoor flexible facility for one-to-one and small group learning. We consistently achieve strong outcomes, above national and local averages. And we are relentlessly focused on improvement, to achieve excellence with these many assets and a year on from now, the improvements will make the school noticeably different. By September 2022, we anticipate the school being evaluated by its staff and Governors as good. If you are a prospective parent who still has questions and concerns, please come and talk to us and talk to our existing parents to hear about their experiences of the school. We are also planning an informal coffee morning for prospective parents on Friday 7th January at 9.15am which will be supported by the PTA, where parents and some Early Years Team members will be available to chat to.