

Brackley Church of England Junior School

Manor Road, Brackley, NN13 6EE

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- School leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is good enough to allow pupils reach the standards they are capable of by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers and leaders do not focus enough on how much pupils are learning in lessons and over time.
- The leadership of mathematics has not been effective in improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement in this subject.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and especially mathematics is not consistently good throughout the school.
- Pupils do not reach the same standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling as they do in reading.
- Teachers do not always make work challenging for pupils of all abilities and so it is too easy for some and too difficult for others. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Marking does not tell pupils clearly how to improve their work. Teachers do not routinely check that pupils act on the advice given.
- Standards of work and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are not good enough for the ability of most of the pupils.
- Handwriting skills are not taught well and the untidy presentation of work in books is sometimes not tackled by teachers.
- Senior leaders have not collected or used data about pupils' attainment effectively to identify where individuals need additional help or where groups of pupils are not making the progress they should.
- Checks on the difference additional funding is making to sport and to the progress of disadvantaged pupils are not robust enough.
- The governing body has not kept a close check on the quality of education provided. Governors have only recently begun to challenge the school's leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has acted quickly and made essential improvements at the school.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The school's caring ethos nurtures pupils and ensures they feel safe.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils are safe and secure. Staff work well with parents to help pupils feel safe, attend regularly and enjoy school. Attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ workbooks during lessons and scrutinised work from the current and the previous year. Inspectors observed two assemblies.
- Pupils’ behaviour was observed in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, governors and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, letters from parents, and had conversations with parents as they dropped their children off at the start of school.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined school documentation including data on pupils’ progress, and records of meetings of the governing body, teachers’ performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michael Appleby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Morley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. This additional funding is used to support looked after children and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school operates before school provision.
- The school has experienced several changes of teaching staff and governors since the previous inspection, including new members of the leadership team.
- The interim headteacher took up the post on 1 November 2014. Three teachers joined the school in September 2014, two of whom are newly qualified.
- During the last year, seven governors resigned and four were appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it is consistently good and accelerates pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - teachers use information from the new assessment system to provide a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities, especially in mathematics
 - disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs get the support they need to make good progress, particularly in mathematics
 - learning tasks enable pupils to gain new knowledge and skills securely in all subjects
 - pupils' handwriting skills are developed and all staff insist on high standards of presentation
 - marking clearly tells pupils how to improve their work and teachers check they act on the guidance given
 - teachers focus on building pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling and provide opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - assessment data are used effectively to identify the individuals and groups of pupils that are at risk of underachievement and they get the support needed to accelerate their progress
 - science, history, and geography are taught in sufficient depth to allow pupils to make better progress
 - teachers and leaders accurately evaluate the impact of teaching on how much pupils learn in lessons
 - especially in mathematics, subject leaders have more impact on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
 - additional government funding is used effectively to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils
 - funds for the provision of sporting and physical activities are used more effectively to improve pupils' health and their understanding of the importance of leading fit and healthy lives
 - the governing body challenges leaders more effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not kept a close enough check on the quality of teaching or the achievement of pupils, and so pupils have not made the progress they are capable of, especially in mathematics. Underperformance has not been tackled rigorously enough through providing training, support or staff appraisal.
- The school does not use its data on pupils' attainment and progress data effectively to guide teachers' planning. This means teachers do not always give pupils work at the right level to move their learning on because they do not have a clear understanding of what each pupil has learned. The school is working to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments by working with another school to agree standards and by carrying out internal moderation more frequently.
- Senior leaders do not use the data available to them to identify where pupils need additional help or where groups of pupils are not making the progress they should. The recent purchase and implementation of a computer-based assessment system has begun to improve the senior team's interpretation of these data.
- The school's leaders have not placed enough emphasis on the development of mathematics and, as a result, too many pupils are not making good progress in this subject. Their progress in this subject has been below average over the past two years. In particular, the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, although closing, are still too wide.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers have a strong focus on improving spelling, punctuation and grammar. Ineffective teaching in this area has resulted in pupils' attainment being lower than it is in reading. Teachers do not teach these skills well enough or correct pupil's mistakes often enough for their skills to improve over time.
- School leaders are not using pupil premium funding effectively enough to ensure that the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school are closing fast enough, especially in mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Subject leaders are not being effective in improving teaching or raising achievement in the areas they lead. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught but not always in sufficient depth to ensure good gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly in science, history and geography. Subject skills are not being taught sufficiently well for pupils to reach the levels expected at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school has not used its additional sports funding effectively to promote pupils' physical education. Not enough use has been made of the 30 mountain bicycles that were purchased. However, recent changes are allowing pupils to take part in a wider range of clubs and competitive sports events, such as the cross-country event that took place during the inspection.
- The interim headteacher is making staff more accountable for the progress of their pupils. Training has started to improve the teaching skills of all staff, but this has yet to result in teaching that is consistently good. She has also led a number of changes to assessment and monitoring which have improved teachers' knowledge of pupils' attainment and progress. This is helping teachers to match work more closely to pupils' abilities.
- Senior and middle leaders have recently improved their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are implementing appropriate action plans for improvement. For example, the recent acquisition of a computerised system for recording and tracking pupil's progress is having an immediate impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders and staff have created a calm, positive and purposeful learning environment for the pupils. This manifests itself in the pupils' good behaviour and attitudes, their willingness to learn, and their pride in the school. Leaders ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils, and that pupils are taught

to avoid discrimination in all its forms.

- There are robust and effective procedures to ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. This is an inclusive school where positive relationships are clearly evident. The headteacher and staff very successfully promote equality of opportunity, good care and the well-being of pupils. Most parents are very complimentary about how well the school looks after their children.
- Pupils have a good understanding of faiths and cultures. Pupils show respect and politeness to everyone. Core values such as honesty, respect and tolerance are fostered throughout the school and so pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Voting for representatives to the school council helps pupils understand democratic processes. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted effectively, as seen by inspectors in two excellent assemblies.
- Links with parents are a notable strength. Those who responded to the online questionnaire were very positive about the way the school cares for their children, and inspection evidence agrees with these views.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school. It funds a link to a 'learning hub' school to give training and support to teachers and governors. Partnership work with other schools is helpful and allows staff to learn from best practice.

■ The governance of the school:

- In the period since the last inspection, the governing body was not effective in analysing in detail the below-average progress made by pupils, or in checking if actions for improvement had the impact intended. There was a lack of challenge to school leaders, which contributed to the decline in the school's overall effectiveness.
- Although some governors are relatively new, they have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and know how the school performs compared to other schools nationally. They are closely involved in the recently revised school self-evaluation and improvement plan. Their recent training has ensured that they now have a better understanding the school's attainment and progress data. They are now very focused on checking that the actions taken by school leaders make a difference to the progress of pupils.
- Following a period of change, the governing body is now capable of ensuring that the school moves forward. Governors know that the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. They are determined to improve their knowledge and understanding of the school's performance and hold school leaders to account much more rigorously. Governors are keen to advance their own skills and are receiving training from the local authority to increase their effectiveness.
- Governors are aware of how the school uses the pupil premium and primary sport funds but they have not evaluated the impact of this extra funding. The minutes of meetings of the governing body show that governors have asked about the impact of spending, but governors have not been successful in ensuring that pupils supported through pupil premium funding make the progress they should and narrow the gap between their attainment and that of others.
- The school's website, although mainly meeting statutory requirements, does not provide information about the curriculum, the use and impact of the primary sport funding or pupil premium funding.
- Governors understand how the performance of staff is managed and how this links to pay increases. Effective oversight of the school's budget means resources are mostly deployed effectively.
- The governing body checks that its policies and procedures for safeguarding are up to date, along with staff training in child protection. It understands their duties with regard to the recruitment of staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils speak positively about how much they enjoy and value being in this school and this is reflected in their smart appearance and good manners. They are friendly, polite and respectful towards all adults and respond quickly to any instructions given to them. Pupils cooperate well with each other, and listen respectfully to each other's contributions in discussions. This leads to a calm and positive learning environment.

- Pupils are keen to learn. Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual arriving to school. They show good levels of concentration and persevere well with their learning tasks. They respond quickly to teachers' instructions so that lessons usually flow without interruption. Pupils' eagerness to learn develops from the way all staff use praise and encouragement to develop confidence and build positive relationships.
- All staff and most parents who responded to questionnaires believe that pupils' behaviour is good and that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively. Pupils respond well to the rewards used by staff to encourage their academic and personal development. A few parents expressed a concern about behaviour and bullying, but inspection evidence shows that overall this is managed very well by the school. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that most pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes.
- Most pupils are keen to share ideas during lessons and their enthusiastic contributions significantly improve their learning and progress. Sometimes, however, when teaching fails to stimulate their interest or does not challenge them enough, pupils lose concentration and need reminders from staff to behave.
- Pupils' views, collected through democratic representation on the school council, for example, are regularly considered when school leaders are making decisions. One such example is the improvement to the playground and play equipment.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The security of the site and entry to the building are effective in controlling access during the school day. Adults are fully checked before being appointed to work in school.
- Staff are appropriately trained to make sure they are very clear about their responsibilities in protecting children. Safety audits, practices and risk assessments make sure that the activities children do are safe. Staff are well trained in matters of first aid.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying and say that it does not happen. School records support this view. Consequently, pupils feel safe.
- Parents and staff express the view that pupils are safe and well looked after. Pupils say they feel safe because 'The teachers care about us and look after us.'
- The breakfast club is well supervised and provides the pupils who attend with a safe, friendly and familiar caring environment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching does not always get the best from the pupils. Consequently, all groups of pupils do not make consistently good progress and achieve well in all year groups. Inspectors' observations of lessons, the work in pupils' books and the school's own data show that teaching is not yet strong enough across the school to lead to sustained, good achievement.
- Teachers do not always set work that challenges all groups of pupils. On occasions, work is too easy for some and too difficult for others. This situation slows the pace of learning. In mathematics lessons, the most-able pupils sometimes repeat too much of what they already know and lack a greater challenge.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not effective enough, and teachers do not ensure that pupils apply these skills in their work across the curriculum. Expectations regarding the quality of pupils' written work are not consistently high, and so untidy handwriting, poor presentation and inaccurate spelling and grammar persist for some pupils because they are not guided well to do better.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is improving since the introduction of the new marking policy. However, marking does not consistently give pupils clear guidance about how they can

improve their work and this restricts the amount of progress they make. Pupils are not always given corrections or set additional tasks to support or challenge them further. Teachers do not routinely expect pupils to respond to marking or check that they do the corrections or make the improvements required.

- Teachers organise most learning competently. They manage pupils well and foster positive relationships. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to work contribute well to their learning. They sustain their concentration and interest for long periods when they are enthused and engaged, but this is not the case when teaching activities are dull and uninspiring. Classrooms are well organised, tidy and attractive. Stimulating display of pupils' work supports and celebrates learning. Pupils' skills are improved through regular, well-planned homework.
- Teachers ensure that pupils read frequently and that they read regularly to an adult in school. They ensure that pupils read a wide range of literature and encourage them to try new authors. Most pupils enjoy reading and are able to read fluently by the time they leave the school. Older pupils learn all have the skills required to help them read unfamiliar words and understand what they read.
- The teaching of writing is improving and there are examples of high-quality writing in English in each year group. However, teachers are not providing opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- The teaching of mathematics is not consistently good. Most pupils show clear knowledge and understanding of how to make calculations using all four operations, but progress is slowed when activities are not suitably challenging. Teaching focuses on the learning and practice of key facts and skills, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve mathematical problems.
- Some activities fully engage the pupils and challenge them. For example, pupils in Year 6 made good progress when planning a report about the eruption of Vesuvius and its effect on Pompeii. The teacher skilfully asked questions to check their understanding and encouraged them to apply and extend their knowledge. The task was challenging for different groups so pupils of all abilities made good progress.
- Teaching assistants are mostly used effectively in classes to provide targeted support for pupils who require additional help with their work. These pupils generally make similar progress to their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from additional support, which enables them to take a full part in lessons. This support and extra help contributes well to their ability to contribute to lessons and make progress. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because many pupils do not make good progress, particularly in mathematics. While pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013 and 2014 was in line with the national average, this does not represent good progress from their above-average starting points in Year 3.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from additional support and specially chosen programmes of work and make similar progress to their classmates.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well enough. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils had made progress similar to their peers in reading and writing, but made less progress in mathematics. Pupil premium funding is not used effectively to enable the most-able disadvantaged pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The gaps in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in school and nationally narrowed in 2014 for reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about the same as that of their classmates in reading, but they were six months behind in writing and

mathematics. Their attainment was similar to other pupils nationally in reading and writing, but eight months behind in mathematics.

- The most-able pupils do not make enough progress. They sometimes still have to complete tasks that are too easy for them. Progress from their above-average starting points in Year 3 is below that is expected. In 2014, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the higher levels was in line with the national average for reading and writing, but below average for mathematics.
- By the time they leave the school, most pupils read confidently, capably and with understanding. They speak with enthusiasm about their reading and the range of authors and genres that teachers have introduced to them. As one pupil said, 'I read for enjoyment but also because it helps me do well at school.'

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121961
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	456003

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Marchant
Headteacher	Rosalyn Peet (Interim Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2012
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