

Brill Church of England School

The Firs, Brill, Aylesbury, HP18 9RY

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher is determined that all pupils leave Brill ready for their secondary education. Governors, senior leaders and teaching staff are equally determined.
- The headteacher is passionate about teaching and learning. He works closely with other school leaders and teachers to make sure that teaching and pupils' achievement is good and improving.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years, securing essential skills, including reading and writing.
- Across the school, most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum captures pupils' interest and encompasses a wide range of subjects. Music is a strength.
- From the early years onwards, teachers plan imaginative activities that encourage pupils' curiosity and deepen their thinking.
- The school's Christian ethos ensures that pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong. Links with the church and the community provide a range of opportunities for pupils' personal growth.
- Parents value the school and consider it to be a friendly community.
- Clear rules and routines are in place to support pupils' behaviour. Parents and pupils agree that behaviour is good and well managed.
- The school recognises the importance of keeping pupils safe. Important checks are routinely carried out.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects and year groups.
- Action plans are not sufficiently focused on helping pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects and year groups.
- Teachers do not always maintain high expectations for pupils who are working independently. In these instances, pupils make less progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, two of which were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team evaluated pupils' work and heard some pupils reading. They met with a group of pupils to talk about their work and the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with significant responsibilities, and four representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground and took into account 41 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered two letters from parents.
- A range of documents were looked at including the school's own information on pupils' achievement, records showing leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records concerning pupils' behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to how the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brill Church of England School is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- Children attend on a full-time basis in the Reception Year.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils (those who qualify for pupil premium which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after). In most year groups, there are no more than one or two disadvantaged pupils. In Year 6 in 2014, there were no disadvantaged pupils.
- Most pupils are White British and almost none speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Brill Church of England School works with other schools as part of the Thame Partnership of Schools and the Bernwode Schools Community.
- The school has achieved the following awards: Bronze School Games, Primary Science Quality Mark (Gold), International School Award, Healthy Schools and Investors in People.
- Brill Church of England School converted to become an academy in April 2013. When its predecessor school, Brill Church of England Combined School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- Two middle leaders became assistant headteachers in September 2014 to cover the planned absence of the deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' achievement so that they make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects and year groups by:
 - ensuring that leaders' plans focus on all pupils making outstanding progress
 - making sure that all teachers, including in the early years, consistently maintain high expectations of pupils working independently.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is determined that all pupils leave Brill ready for their secondary education. Governors, senior leaders and teaching staff echo this view. There is a shared understanding about what needs to be done. This commitment has enabled good progress across the school for all groups of learners this year.
- The headteacher uses his passion for teaching and learning well to drive school improvement. He works closely with teachers and fosters their development through coaching or professional training. As a result, the quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers are rightly accountable for the progress that pupils make. Performance management is rigorous and links to pay are well established. This ensures that teachers are focused on securing effective learning for all pupils, ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Middle leaders have increased their levels of responsibility and, together with the headteacher, form a strong and cohesive leadership team. Both leaders have made important changes to teaching that have led to improvements in pupils' learning. They can explain the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning, and use them well to form an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. From this, they have identified some relevant actions to further improve the school. However, action plans are not sufficiently focused on helping pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects and year groups.
- The curriculum captures pupils' interests and encompasses a wide range of subjects. Music is a strong feature of the school. Pupils practising for the upcoming production of *'Joseph and the amazing technicolour dreamcoat'* exhibited this well. After-school clubs such as cookery, information and communication technology (ICT) and sports activities provide further enrichment opportunities.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Respect is one of the school's core values and is regularly reinforced in assemblies. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to learn about other cultures and celebrate a range of festivals. For example, pupils enjoy learning about Diwali and Chinese New Year. Pupils know that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The school's Christian ethos ensures that the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is strong. Links with the church and the community provide opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills through activities such as lunch clubs with elderly neighbours. A 'prayer space' is created annually during prayer week. There is a 'Friday Club' that has a spiritual theme.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the very small number of eligible pupils. They receive support that is tailored to their individual needs. As a result, all eligible pupils are making good progress in their learning and personal development.
- The school works hard to tackle inequalities between different groups. Pupils with special educational needs are making progress that is at least as good as their classmates. This is because leaders have increased the support that they give to these pupils and matched it carefully to their needs.
- The additional sports funding is used well to provide a range of sporting opportunities and promote equality of opportunity. Pupils enjoy learning sports such as seated hockey that enable the participation of all, including those with physical disabilities. Pupils also benefit from lessons taught by a sports coach. Participation in sports has increased significantly, including amongst pupils who have been reluctant to take part in the past.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are sound and meet requirements. Leaders have clear systems in place that are understood by everybody. The school carries out appropriate checks to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Parents are positive about the school and value it as a 'friendly community'. The very large majority would recommend it to others and feel that their children are making good progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a range of experience that enables them to provide good leadership. They receive appropriate information from the headteacher that helps them to understand how well the school is performing. Governors are able to describe the quality of teaching and how performance management has been used to improve teaching further. Consequently, they are clear about how underperformance is addressed and how pay is used to reward good teaching.
 - Governors use information from checks on pupils' learning to hold leaders to account. Minutes of meetings show that they ask challenging questions and make visits to the school to find out how well different groups of pupils are learning. Governors use some of this information to contribute ideas to improvement planning. However, they are not ensuring that plans are sufficiently focused on helping pupils make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects and year groups.

- Governors carry out their responsibilities with due diligence. This includes ensuring financial stability and checking that additional funding is spent appropriately. Governors hold regular meetings with leaders to assure themselves that safeguarding is effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Adults consistently apply the rules and clear routines are in place to support pupils. This means that misbehaviour is quickly addressed and serious incidents are rare. There have been no exclusions in the last two years. Parents and pupils feel that behaviour is good and well managed.
- During lunchtimes, pupils display good manners and care for each other. They work together to clear up the dining hall. Year 6 pupils eat their lunch with the youngest children and are valuable role models. This helps pupils to settle in quickly. One pupil stated: 'On my first day I was really welcomed.'
- In class, pupils listen to their teacher and willingly complete tasks. They work well together and share ideas readily. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration when expectations are not made clear enough, particularly when they are working independently. In these instances, progress is lessened.
- Attendance is well above the national average and has increased over the past three years. This is because leaders have set clear expectations and shared these widely with parents. The school monitors absence closely and works with families to improve attendance if they have concerns.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school recognises the importance of keeping pupils safe. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and refined to reflect updated guidance. Risk assessments and important checks are routinely carried out.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare and that they are confident that adults will help them if they have a problem. Pupils are taught about different types of bullying such as racist behaviour or cyber-bullying. Most pupils feel very safe at school.
- Safety is an important part of the curriculum. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when using technology as well as how to recognise unsafe situations when out and about. As a result, pupils can explain how to stay safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is enabling most pupils to make good progress over time.
- Teachers plan rich, imaginative activities that pupils readily engage in. For example, in the forest school, pupils created an island habitat for an animal. Teachers asked pupils to build the habitat and explain how they would meet their animal's needs. This ensured that pupils developed their skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects as they were keen that their chosen creature survived.
- Relationships are strong and are used well to challenge and extend learning. Teachers use careful questioning to help pupils to reflect on their understanding and provide more detail. Teachers use what they know about individuals to tailor their questions and improve learning.
- The teaching of writing has improved this school year. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subjects and for different purposes. Teachers demonstrate writing well. In Year 4, the teacher showed pupils how to write an effective poem about an animal. Improved techniques have raised achievement in writing.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught systematically from Reception onwards. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to good effect, maintaining a high level of challenge. Because of this, pupils read well and use effective strategies to help them work out unfamiliar words.
- In mathematics, teachers plan activities that allow pupils to explore ideas that deepen their understanding. In Year 3, a group of pupils were inspired to extend the task that required them to measure capacity and convert measurements, even though the rest of the class had returned inside. The teaching assistant supported the pupils with well-thought-out questions that enabled them to read the scale and calculate how much more water was needed to make a chosen amount.
- Lessons are well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers effectively use information from checks on learning to

set high expectations and design activities that challenge pupils. However, when pupils are working independently, sometimes, these expectations are not sustained or communicated clearly enough. This can lead to pupils not completing challenging work and this slows progress.

- Marking is used successfully to increase pupils' learning. Teachers mark work regularly and follow the school's policy closely. Pupils respond well to comments and make changes to their work. Pupils know what they need to work on in English and mathematics, and use this information to improve.
- Specialist teachers provide expertise and promote learning in French, Spanish, music and physical education. Confident teaching enables pupils to speak languages regularly and build fluency. Pupils are motivated to learn French so that they can practise it during the Year 6 visit to Normandy.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils of all abilities. They work well with small groups and individuals, using judicious questioning to further learning and break down tasks.
- Homework is a particular strength of the school. It is regular, covers a range of subjects and often includes creative tasks. Most parents feel that the school sets appropriate homework.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Across the school, most pupils have made good progress this year in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is not outstanding because pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects and year groups.
- Standards rose in 2014 at the end of Key Stage 1. In all subjects, pupils attained significantly above the national average. Current information shows that this high level of performance has been maintained.
- Year 6 pupils leaving the school in 2014 reached standards in all subjects that were just above the national average in all subjects apart from writing. Attainment in mathematics and spelling, grammar and punctuation increased. The proportion making expected progress in reading and mathematics was average, writing was below average.
- This year, progress in writing has improved and pupils are expected to achieve standards just above the national average at the end of Year 6.
- In 2014, there were no disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 eligible for pupil premium funding. There are very few disadvantaged pupils in the school, making it difficult to compare their progress to their classmates. However, most pupils eligible for this funding are making good progress because of the additional support that they receive.
- Children join the school with skills that are mostly typical for their age. The large majority of children are well prepared for Year 1 by the end of Reception.
- In the 2014 Year 1 phonics check, more pupils than nationally met the expected standard. Data show that most pupils currently in Year 1 have achieved well.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in Year 2 was above the national average, particularly in reading. This was also the case for pupils leaving Year 6. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 was above the national average in all subjects apart from in writing. The most-able pupils are on track to achieve well this year because teachers provide sufficient challenge for them.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Because of carefully targeted additional teaching, some pupils with special educational needs have made accelerated progress this year.

The early years provision

is good

- Leaders have had a positive impact on achievement in reading and writing in Reception. Teachers have increased opportunities for children to read and write. Writing has improved because teachers have raised their expectations of children over time. For example, children succeeded in writing their names early and then were challenged to write sentences about different topics. As a result, more children have developed skills in literacy than those typical for their age this year.
- Teaching provides a good level of challenge for children. Teachers design activities that encourage curiosity and invite pupils to explain their thinking. A science activity required the children to use their senses to find out about unusual fruits. One child was keen to explore which part of the passion fruit was edible and then noted: 'You can't listen because it does not make a noise!'
- The strong personal development begins in the early years. Children are confident because adults value their interests and allow them to express their individuality. Inspectors saw, on more than one occasion, two girls enthusiastically dancing while listening to music in their own 'silent disco'.

- Children know the routines; they behave well and show concentration when working with their teacher. They play safely together and can use a range of equipment independently including scissors, glue and bicycles.
- Adults work closely with children to carry out regular checks on their progress. Teachers use this to plan appropriate learning across the curriculum and at home. Parents support their children well with 'home learning'. Because learning meets children's needs, children make good progress from their starting points and the large majority are ready for Year 1.

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	139446
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	461945

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Wagstaffe
Headteacher	Andy Leach
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01844 237710
Fax number	
Email address	office@brill.bucks.sch.uk

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