

Broken Cross Primary Academy and Nursery

Parkett Heyes Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8UD

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Good leadership and teaching have not been in place long enough to have a significant impact on outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2. In 2016, results of national assessments indicated that pupils' progress and attainment in writing were well below national expectations at the end of Year 6.
- Despite implementing the recommendations from external reviews of additional funding, the impact for disadvantaged pupils is not yet resulting in accelerated learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high, particularly for writing and the most able pupils. While attendance has improved overall, a minority of pupils do not come to school regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, fully supported by staff, governors and The Fallibroome Trust, has changed the culture of the school so that improvement is now rapid.
- Teaching has improved so that progress this year is good in both key stages.
- Outcomes for children in phonics have improved steadily and are now good. This strong start to learning is helping pupils to achieve at least the expected levels of attainment at the end of key stage 1, from low starting points.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are friendly and considerate and show a real enthusiasm for learning. Behaviour is typically good and pupils feel safe.
- Children in the early years make a positive start to their learning because they like school and feel safe and secure. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development now matches the national figures.
- The new governing body knows the school well. Governors make good use of information on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress to hold leaders to account.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils, and particularly those who are disadvantaged, make progress that is at least good, by:
 - setting higher expectations for what pupils can achieve, especially in writing and for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that the recommendations of the recent reviews of the pupil premium are more effectively implemented to speed up the progress made by disadvantaged pupils
 - continuing to work with parents to improve punctuality and attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school which she passionately communicates to all staff, pupils and parents. Everyone involved with the school shares her aims to ensure that all pupils have the best possible education and life chances that can be provided.
- A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. Staff, pupils and parents feel they are listened to and their opinions valued. Parents are vocal in their praise for all that the school is doing and feel confident that their children are safe, well cared for and taught effectively. Parents are invited into class on Fridays to see what work their children have completed each week. Parents are kept fully informed about what their children are learning through regular newsletters and advice on how they can help their children learn and be successful.
- The headteacher, very effectively supported by The Fallibroome Trust, has evaluated and strengthened all areas of the school's work and has well-thought-through priorities for improvement. Improvements in the teaching of mathematics and reading have made a difference to outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2. The school is now working on accelerating progress in writing.
- Teachers' performance is managed systematically. Staff have targets relating to their pupils' progress. Strong support is provided in school and through the wider trust for any staff who feel they need additional coaching, support for assessment or advice. Sharing good practice has resulted in better progress for all pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now achieving well and more children than ever reach a good level of development at the end of Reception.
- Senior leaders and governors check on how well additional funding is being used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make better progress. The funding is used to provide one-to-one support for individuals, contributes to breakfast club and ensures that disadvantaged pupils are able to take part in wider curriculum opportunities. School leaders have commissioned two reviews of how this funding is spent and have put into practice recommendations to make the funding even more effective. The impact of these changes is just emerging and, as a result, the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is only slowly narrowing.
- Staff have developed a new behaviour management policy which is very effective. In the last academic year and in the current year so far there have been no exclusions because behaviour is well managed and pupils largely enjoy school. School leaders also place great emphasis on the importance of regular attendance, so that it is improving overall and the rate of persistent absence has started to reduce.
- Subjects are taught in an interesting and creative way, often through topics. There is a very necessary emphasis on English, mathematics and science but, increasingly, pupils have input into what they learn and how they learn it. All staff work hard to help pupils become resilient, resourceful and reflective in their approach to learning. These aspects of the curriculum are contributing to pupils' improving progress and enjoyment of learning. Subjects are enriched by special events such as Roald Dahl day, Indian

themed lunches and creative arts work with visiting artists. Pupils enjoy a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre each year.

- The curriculum is effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their awareness and appreciation of British values. This is seen in the work pupils have done to research events such as Remembrance Day, their understanding of different world faiths and their enjoyment of having their own school parliament.
- Funding to promote sporting activities in primary schools is used successfully to introduce pupils to new sports such as karate, and to encourage more active participation in competitions and events. The school benefits from membership of The Fallibroome Trust because pupils are able to use the facilities at the high school.
- Effective use of funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has enabled these pupils to make good progress.
- The school has benefited enormously from its membership of The Fallibroome Trust. Trust leaders took prompt and decisive action when the school opened as an academy in September 2014. Through the trust, the school has access to a wide range of professional expertise. Teachers from Broken Cross are now leading training sessions for staff in other schools.

Governance of the school

- Governance has been transformed since the school opened as an academy. Many new governors have been appointed. Governors are highly professional and clear about their roles. They are dedicated to school improvement and determined that the school should provide the best it can for the local community. The number of pupils on roll is steadily increasing as the school improves.
- Governors provide both challenge and support to the school because they know it well from first-hand visits. They understand performance data and study the records of pupils' progress. They ask questions about groups, even though all groups are very small in this school, and about individuals. They check on how effectively funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used and how much progress the school has made in implementing the actions recommended in the funding reviews.
- Governors have a deep knowledge of the arrangements for checking on teachers' performance and ensure that finances are well spent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of safety pervades the school. Pupils feel safe and understand what makes a situation unsafe. Pupils and their parents have confidence in the school's systems to ensure their well-being. The school works in close partnership with a number of other agencies to protect children whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Work in pupils' books and their progress in lessons shows that teaching is good across the school. This good teaching has not yet been in place long enough to overcome a legacy of underachievement for pupils at the end of Year 6. Progress for all pupils is accelerating across a range of subjects.
- Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are very positive. Inspired by their teachers, most pupils show a genuine enthusiasm for learning and work hard.
- Teachers use thoughtful strategies to accelerate pupils' progress in writing. This was seen in a lower key stage 2 lesson where pupils were challenged to write 'bubble poems'. Pupils were using the best words they could think of and had to put them into a pattern which resembled a bubble. They were inspired further by the teacher and teaching assistant blowing bubbles across the room.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are encouraged to talk about their topic before starting to write, for example about magical creatures. Teachers do not just seek to fire the imagination, there is also a strong focus on the importance of using dictionaries and making sure that grammar and spelling are accurate.
- Teaching of reading is effective. Teachers and teaching assistants are adept at supporting pupils who are low attaining or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they gain ground in reading securely. Pupils have regular reading sessions, which are well planned, offering pupils a range of different activities. Pupils whose progress is slow receive individual support that boosts their skills and confidence.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils focus strongly on problem-solving and applying mathematical skills to real-life situations. Pupils say they like this way of working because they can see why skill in mathematics will be useful in many situations. Pupils are resilient when they encounter problems and do not give up easily.
- Science is taught successfully, largely through conducting investigations on topics such as researching natural selection, the effects of air pollution, friction and how to identify the best reflective materials. The work in pupils' books shows that they understand scientific processes and how to present their findings in a logical and clear way.
- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with class teachers and make a strong contribution to the progress of groups and individuals. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently good progress as a result.
- Leaders and teachers are aware that they now need to focus on making sure that all pupils are challenged so that they can achieve the best possible outcomes. Just occasionally, work is too easy for the most able pupils.
- Teachers are aware of the skills and needs of disadvantaged pupils in their classes. They give sensitive support to individuals.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the work of their teachers. Most value their education and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to improve and to impress their teachers and parents.
- Pupils trust the adults in school and feel safe. Pupils are confident that they are free from bullying and that unkind comments are frowned upon. They say that name-calling is rare and there is virtually no bullying. If any occurs, it is dealt with at once. A team of anti-bullying pupil ambassadors take their roles seriously and try to make sure that everyone in school is safe and happy.
- Pupils know about different ways of keeping safe, including internet safety.
- The school's emphasis on building pupils' resilience when they are faced with challenges is helping pupils' mental health and sense of well-being.
- Pupils can explain what they understand by British values and are proud of their own school parliament which meets monthly to represent their views and discuss ways of improving their school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The conduct of pupils around the school is often exemplary. They are friendly, polite, welcoming and play well together. Older pupils enjoy looking after younger ones. Pupils show considerable self-discipline, so they do not misbehave if things go wrong in lessons.
- Consistently good behaviour has resulted in the reduction of exclusions from being above average in 2014 to no exclusions at all in the last four terms.
- Attendance has been well below average in the past but has risen steadily and is now broadly in line with the national average. Some pupils are not punctual in arriving at school and a few pupils do not attend regularly enough to make good progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2015 to 2016, the results of national tests indicated that the progress of pupils in Year 6 was below average in reading and mathematics and well below in writing. Currently, progress is stronger in key stage 2 but there are still gaps to make up so some pupils are working well below the expected levels.
- Published data information does not reflect the true picture of the strength of the work the school is doing because the number of pupils in any group is small so trends are difficult to identify.

- Disadvantaged pupils across the school are beginning to catch up on lost ground. They are making faster progress than previously but do not yet achieve similar outcomes to other pupils nationally.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress because they have had the benefit of the much better start that children are making in the early years. Outcomes for pupils in Year 1 in phonics match the national figure and attainment has risen by the end of Year 2.
- Work in the books of current key stage 2 pupils shows that in writing they are making faster progress and trying hard to correct errors, improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils are becoming more secure in their basic skills but are still less confident in writing imaginatively. In mathematics, pupils enjoy the 'hunt the mistake' exercises which encourage them to learn how to regularly check their answers. Pupils are starting to build confidence when working on problem-solving challenges in mathematics. The work in their books shows that some are ready to tackle even greater challenges.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because they are well supported by class teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school is now identifying some pupils as most able and providing some opportunities for them to have extension work. For example, five pupils identified as most able in mathematics have had the opportunity to work with one of the trust's high schools. The progress of the most able pupils is starting to improve but not as fast as for other pupils because the level of challenge is inconsistent.
- Improving outcomes and the school's emphasis on developing key skills in reading, writing and mathematics are ensuring that pupils are beginning to be much better prepared for high school. Above all, the positive attitude to learning of the majority of pupils is a real asset.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points. The majority of children begin Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication. They settle quickly and are soon keen to learn and explore.
- Standards at the end of Reception are improving rapidly. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen steadily from 33% in 2015 to 69% in 2016. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- Children use phonics skills competently to read simple, unfamiliar words and show a good understanding of the stories they hear and read. This was seen in the enjoyment that Reception class had with a story about a snowy night and how the animals took shelter. Teachers use puppets and other toys effectively to make stories come alive.
- Adults make sure that children enjoy developing communication skills with songs, talking, answering questions and learning rhymes. The marking of the register is regularly turned into a numeracy game.
- Good relationships are made with parents from the start. Parents are keen to

contribute information from home and enjoy receiving photographs from the children's learning journeys showing what they have been learning. Parents have high praise for the Nursery – making such comments as, 'My child loves each and every day', and 'It is comforting to know your child will be cherished, shown genuine affection and nurtured.'

- The provision for two-year-olds includes their own special quiet learning area with a private nappy-changing room. The children respond well to adults who follow up their interests and enthusiasms. For example, children regularly like to have tea parties for themselves and their toy friends and talk about making cakes and pouring tea. When they are settled and confident, they join in activities with older children such as singing rhymes and learning about colours and numbers.
- Teaching is good. Children are frequently assessed and their next steps carefully planned. The school works with the local authority and others in the academy trust to verify that their assessments are as accurate as possible. Leaders use assessments to identify any children who are underachieving and any who might need specialist help because of individual learning needs. Once children are identified, extra support is provided quickly. Staff are aware of the disadvantaged children in their groups and work to ensure that these children make the same good progress as others.
- Children's behaviour is consistently good. They enjoy each other's company, work and play well together and respond very quickly to adults. They are well aware of the rules for working and playing outside and use the wide range of equipment for outdoor learning safely.
- Leadership is good in the early years. Adults work and plan together as a very effective team. Safeguarding is robust and the setting has stringent security rules. Leaders ensure that staff training is up to date, including for the needs of the youngest children. All the necessary policies are in place to meet welfare requirements. Leaders have well-thought-out plans for further improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	141193
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10022797

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Mannion
Headteacher	Donna Lewis
Telephone number	01625 383029
Website	www.brokencross.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@brokencross.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school converted to academy status in September 2014. It is part of The Fallibroome Trust, a multi-academy trust established in September 2014. The trust currently consists of two secondary schools and four primary schools.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- The school has part-time provision for two-year-olds in the Nursery. Children in Reception attend full time.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2015. Many of the class teachers have joined the school since it became an academy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes and in the Nursery. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector listened to children from Year 2 and Year 6 reading and visited the breakfast club.
- The inspector held discussions with the chair of The Fallibroome Trust, a national leader of education who supported the school last year, the chair of the governing body and other governors, the headteacher and other members of staff including the Nursery teacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector gained the views of pupils from talking with them in lessons and at playtimes, in a more formal meeting with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 and from reviewing the online Ofsted pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector considered the views of parents from the 17 responses to the online questionnaire and from talking to parents as they brought their children to school.
- The views of staff were gained from responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and from many discussions with teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence relating to the school's view of its performance and plans for improvement. Work in pupils' books; assessment data; records relating to the quality of teaching, pupils' attendance and behaviour; and safeguarding documentation were examined.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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