

# Brackley Church of England Junior School

Manor Road, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 6EE

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher's strong determination and commitment to raising standards have led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching following an unsettled period with many staff changes.
- Governors are highly effective. They are fully committed and understand their role in improving the quality of education well. They are fully informed about the progress pupils make. They are actively involved in the life of the school and robustly hold leaders to account for the standards pupils achieve.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are now good. Consequently, pupils are now making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers plan imaginative lessons. The broad and interesting curriculum captures the interest of all pupils. Pupils say that learning is 'fun'. Other subjects are taught well.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and get on well with one another. Pupils feel safe in school. The school environment is calm and purposeful. Safeguarding systems are robustly followed.
- The core values of the school run through all that it does. These values are well known and understood by pupils.
- Most parents are very positive and supportive of the school. They say that their child is safe and happy. A number praise the care and support that their child receives.
- Efforts to improve the teaching of mathematics have been successful. Pupils are undertaking more challenging problems and are better able to explain their thinking.
- There have been strong improvements in pupils' writing. The quality of pupils' handwriting has improved considerably. Pupils write in different styles and for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Some pupils do not take enough care with their spelling. Some teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write in different styles or at length in other subjects such as history and science.
- Occasionally, work for some disadvantaged and most-able pupils is not always carefully matched to their needs. This means that they do not always achieve what they are capable of.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' attainment and progress further by ensuring that all teachers consistently use assessment to match work precisely to the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and the most able.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing further by ensuring that:
  - the spelling of key subject vocabulary and commonly used words is accurately recorded
  - every opportunity is provided for pupils to write in a variety of styles and where appropriate at length in all areas of the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The school has been through a period of significant change. A new headteacher, senior leaders and many teachers, support staff and governors have been appointed to the school over the last two years. 'There has been a transformation,' reported one governor with an enormous sense of pride, 'but we are not satisfied. We have the momentum and are on a march towards outstanding!'
- Since her appointment, the headteacher, supported by the other members of the leadership team, has provided the right balance of challenge and support to ensure that pupils now make good progress. Staff morale is high and there is an all-pervasive 'can do' culture inside the school. Staff are proud to work in the school.
- Leaders have developed a school culture that is both caring and ambitious. They want the very best for the children. This is grounded in a clearly expressed set of key values that pupils know and understand. These are also promoted well around the building.
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of the school's overall performance and the standards achieved by the pupils. This is because they have a range of well-understood processes for checking on what is happening in school. Where strengths are identified, they are celebrated. Where weaknesses are noted, decisive action is taken to remedy them. Arrangements for managing the performance of teachers and for staff training are effective.
- Leaders have identified the important areas for development and have suitable plans in place to deliver the improvements. They make sure that teachers share their high expectations and effective practice. The focus on those areas identified for further improvement has led to significant gains. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Occasionally, work is not matched accurately enough to the needs of specific pupils. When this happens, groups such as the most able and those who are disadvantaged in some classes do not make swift enough progress. Pupils' books show that handwriting, grammar and punctuation have improved. However, leaders know that some pupils' spelling is not yet precise enough. There are plans in place to remedy this.
- In the past, the teaching of mathematics was ineffective. Consequently, there were gaps in pupils' mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Training has been provided for teachers and teaching assistants, and a range of time-focused interventions has been implemented to bring pupils up to the expected standard. These actions have had the desired impact and gaps have closed rapidly.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. A range of themes linked to subjects such as history, geography and design technology is enjoyed by pupils. Themes such as 'Traders and Raiders' and 'Stargazers' capture pupils' imagination and interest well. Music, religious education (RE) and physical education (PE) are taught as discrete subjects and contribute enormously to pupils' enjoyment of learning. A range of other activities and extra-curricular opportunities also support pupils' good progress.
- All staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. The

school's RE curriculum covers this area effectively and is working well. For example, representatives of different religions such as Sikhism and Judaism visit the school regularly to share aspects of their faith with pupils. This makes a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of tolerance, respect and difference.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is threaded through the curriculum and underpins the school's values. British values are also promoted effectively. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their own ideas, for example through the school council.
- The school PE and sport premium is spent well. Skilful teaching is leading to better progression of pupils' PE skills from year to year. The use of sports coaches has increased the take-up of extra-curricular sport by pupils. Increasing numbers of pupils are participating in inter-school competitions.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to diminish the difference between the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the school and those of other pupils nationally. Leaders successfully identify the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face. For example, leaders use some of the funding to support the breakfast club. This ensures that those who attend come to school ready to learn and that their social, emotional and healthcare needs are met, and that they are prepared for learning. Additional teaching is also provided in upper key stage 2, which is having a positive benefit.
- Funding to support special educational needs is used effectively to provide help and intervention for pupils who require additional support. As a result, the needs of these pupils are met and they do well across a range of subjects. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well tracked.
- The local authority has provided decisive and effective support for the school. Local authority advisers have supported staff and governors through the recent improvements by, for example, providing bespoke training, observing teaching alongside leaders and checking on the work in pupils' books.
- Effective links have been established with the main feeder infant school. Staff of both schools are working more closely together to ensure that pupils enjoy a smooth transfer and transition. They are also working to ensure that each understands and agrees the standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 2 and where they need to get to by the end of Year 6. Positive links are also established with schools within the Brackley Area Learning Partnership and the local teaching school.
- A very large majority of parents are supportive of the school. Most of those spoken with during the inspection or who completed the online questionnaire would recommend this school to another parent.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors share the vision and expectations of the headteacher and have contributed significantly to the improvements made since the last inspection. They have responded positively to the governing body and pupil premium reviews.
- Several new governors have joined over the past 12 months and suitable training has been provided to support their induction. Effective training and support have been provided by the local authority.
- Governors know the school and the pupils extremely well. They visit the school

regularly. They are diligent in their focus on the priorities for improvement and ensure that goals set are achieved. They are meticulous in making sure that no aspect of the work is neglected.

- Governors regularly challenge senior leaders and set high standards for the headteacher through her performance management objectives.
- Governors ensure that additional funds are used appropriately so that staff provide the best possible help for pupils.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of promoting pupils' well-being and safety in the school. All staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and look carefully for any signs that support is needed. Every member of staff is trained and up to date with the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education. Staff are committed to supporting the pupils and their families.
- Checks to help keep children safe are carried out thoroughly; for example, the recruitment checks on staff's suitability to work with children are rigorous. The site is safe and secure, and discussion with pupils confirms this. Staff are vigilant and the training they have received means that they are aware of the risks to the pupils in their care.
- The school works effectively with outside agencies to safeguard pupils. For example, the procedures for dealing with pupils who are missing from school are robust.
- All of those parents who spoke with inspectors or completed Ofsted's online questionnaire agree that their child is safe in school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection as a result of well-targeted and effective training and support for teachers and teaching assistants. Most of the teaching in the school is now good.
- The majority of teachers use the information they collect from their assessments to plan activities or set work that is pitched appropriately to pupils' learning needs. However, there are some occasions when work is not matched accurately enough to some pupils' needs, particularly those who are disadvantaged and the most able. When this happens, these groups do not make strong enough progress during the lesson. Leaders have employed additional teachers in Years 5 and 6, which is leading to better targeted work and increased rates of progress, but this is not yet available in Years 3 and 4.
- Classrooms contain a good range of resources to support learning. Teachers and teaching assistants use a range of interventions to support those who are falling behind to catch up. Consequently, the large majority of pupils do well.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are strong. The positive and constructive ethos within classrooms and shared areas supports pupils in making good progress. Low-level

disruption is rare. Occasionally, a few pupils take a little time to settle to their tasks when they move from the carpet activities to their tables, which slows down their progress.

- Teachers' questioning of pupils is effective because staff take care to use precise language and appropriate subject vocabulary. Pupils are keen to engage and offer their ideas and suggestions.
- Most staff are consistent in the application of the school's policy on marking and feedback. However, some teachers do not always pick up on pupils' spelling errors of key vocabulary or commonly known words and insist that these are spelled correctly.
- The focus on reading is high in the school and most pupils are enthusiastic readers. Pupils use their skills well to tackle unfamiliar words and, as they get older, pupils read with increasing fluency and intonation.
- A large majority of pupils make good progress in writing. Work in books and displays around the school reflect pupils' enthusiasm to write. They are exposed to a variety of writing styles such as recounts, factual pieces and poetry. Pupils are well engaged in the topics they write about. For instance, pupils in Year 6 wrote a range of detailed 'practical guides' following extensive research as part of their study of the Second World War. Opportunities are provided for pupils to write in a variety of ways or at length in other subjects, but this is not consistent in every class.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly since the last inspection. Strategies have been implemented to increase pupils' confidence and ability to recall key number facts. Pupils use the most efficient methods to solve their problems. Teachers are providing more problem-solving activities and increased opportunities for pupils to explain how they have arrived at their answer. Together, this is leading to improved outcomes.
- The teaching of music, RE and PE is a strength in the school. High-quality teaching engages pupils, increases their knowledge and develops their skills well. For example, pupils in Year 6 can read music and play tunefully on their recorders. They are also able to work well together to play a variety of tunes on xylophones and glockenspiels. A well-planned, carefully explained and efficiently organised PE lesson helped another Year 6 class develop their basketball skills well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school enormously. One child spoke for many when he said, 'I love school because teachers make learning fun and friends are always here for you.' Pupils speak with great pride about their school and their achievements.
- There is an exceptionally calm, friendly and nurturing atmosphere around the school. 'This school is a wonderful family environment,' wrote one parent. Pupils are confident, considerate and respectful. Acts of collective worship provide time for adults and pupils alike to reflect on Christian values such as reverence.
- Pupils are confident and take their learning seriously. They support each other very

well, especially when their peers experience difficulties with their work or at playtime. They interact sensibly and encourage each other and enjoy working independently, in pairs or in teams both in and outside the classroom. Pupils thrive on taking responsibility. For instance, pupils enjoy the responsibility of being a member of the sports crew or play leaders.

- Pupils understand the need to become responsible citizens and they relish being provided with positions of responsibility such as that of school councillor. As a result, they can talk with confidence about British values such as democracy.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They have been taught about road safety and e-safety, and cyber bullying. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying, 'just falling out', and say that adults deal with these incidents rapidly and effectively when they arise.
- Almost all parents said that their child is happy at school. Many parents are complimentary about the school with comments such as, 'My child... goes with a smile on her face and comes out with a smile on her face. What more can I say? We are very happy here.' Another wrote, 'My daughter could not be happier going to school.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. A determined effort to raise the quality of teaching has had a significant impact in improving behaviour in lessons, so that inattentiveness is rare and there is no disruption to learning because of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils strive to do well.
- The school encourages good behaviour right from the very start. Pupils conduct themselves very well around the school, in lessons, and at lunchtime and playtime. They have very positive attitudes to learning, showing high levels of respect to staff and pupils alike.
- Pupils cannot wait to come to school, as shown by their above-average attendance. They hurry into class, keen to get on with their work. There is always something for them to learn. Consequently, pupils make very good use of lesson time and appreciate the opportunities provided for them.
- At playtimes, pupils of all ages play and socialise extremely well together. A wide range of activities is provided to ensure that there are plenty of things to do to keep pupils occupied and engaged.
- Most parents who replied to the online questionnaire have no concerns about pupils' behaviour or how staff deal with any very occasional misbehaviour. This view was supported by staff and inspection evidence.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Current pupils in school are making strong progress across the curriculum in almost all classes. From their different starting points, pupils are now developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- National assessment results in 2016 were too low. They indicated that writing was the weakest subject. This year, progress in writing is much improved throughout the

school. The whole-school focus has helped secure improvements in teaching. As a result, the school's data and monitoring information, along with a scrutiny of books and work, show that pupils are now making at least expected progress and many are making accelerated progress. Consequently, a greater number are now working at the standard expected for their age.

- Since the last inspection, pupils' writing is much improved both in quality and quantity. Handwriting is neat and carefully presented. Pupils' writing is interesting and engaging because they use a rich and varied vocabulary. Although teachers provide resources to help with spelling, such as word banks and dictionaries, these are not always used by some pupils effectively. Consequently, their spelling of key vocabulary and unfamiliar words is not always accurate enough.
- Pupils are being provided with increased opportunities to write in different styles, for a range of purposes and for a variety of audiences. Pupils are also provided with more opportunities and time to write at length. They are building up their writing stamina. Most teachers are providing opportunities to write extensively in other subjects such as science and history, but this is not yet consistent in every class.
- The relentless whole-school focus on improving mathematics is accelerating pupils' progress. A few lower-attaining pupils have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding due to the variability of past teaching. These pupils are being provided with additional targeted support, which is helping them catch up and increase their confidence.
- Reading remains a high priority in school and many pupils develop a love of reading and of books; they read widely and extensively. Pupils talk with confidence about their favourite books and authors. They access a range of fiction and non-fiction books from the school's library and use technology well to support their research skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged are making good progress from their different starting points because they receive well-targeted additional assistance in lessons to back up the good teaching. The teacher with responsibility for special educational needs uses the additional funding well to help accelerate pupils' progress.
- In Years 5 and 6, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities outstrips that of other pupils because they receive high-quality teaching support. Occasionally, one or two teachers in lower key stage 2 do not pitch work or activities precisely enough, which slows down pupils' pace of learning.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are well targeted through additional support by senior leaders, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Regular meetings about pupils' progress are used to check how well these pupils are doing and show that individual pupils are making faster progress. However, there are a few occasions when opportunities are missed in lessons to challenge these pupils further.



## School details

Unique reference number	121961
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10023105

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sallyanne Perkins
Headteacher	Rosalynne Peet
Telephone number	01280 707060
Website	<a href="http://www.brackleycofejuniorschool.co.uk">www.brackleycofejuniorschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@bjs.northants-ecl.gov.uk">head@bjs.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is an extremely low number of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion who have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The school has a breakfast club that is operated by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons and attended an act of collective worship. All observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made several short visits to observe learning and small-group activities at other times.
- The inspectors held a meeting with members of the governing body and a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. They also met with school staff, including senior, middle and subject leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety and the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance, governing body evaluations, monitoring and evaluation summaries by the local authority, and safeguarding documents.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, as well as informal conversations with them during lessons and at breaktimes. The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- The inspectors took account of the 54 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents informally at the end of the school day. There were no responses to questionnaires for pupils or staff. Inspectors informally met with 24 members of staff to seek their views of the school.

## Inspection team

Paul Weston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Lowther

Ofsted Inspector

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