

Brook Acre Community Primary School

Hilden Road, Padgate, Warrington, Cheshire WA2 0JP

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's drive and ambition has ensured improvements to the quality of education since the previous inspection.
- Leaders set very high standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils make good progress.
- Leaders and governors know the school well and monitor its work carefully. They are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent.
- Pupils across the school write successfully for a range of purposes and their handwriting is neat.
- Additional adults and teaching assistants support pupils' learning successfully. They are deployed effectively and trained to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils display enthusiasm for learning. They are proud to belong to their school and appreciate its care and support.
- Pupils' safety is paramount. Systems are rigorous and regularly checked to keep pupils as safe as possible.
- The proportion of pupils that achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check is above the national average.
- Attendance is strong as a result of leaders' tenacious work in supporting its pupils and families.
- The early years provision is good. Children make good progress from their various starting points. Leaders recognise the need to build on existing practice to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils are well prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Lessons are thoroughly planned. However, in some lessons, there is insufficient challenge to deepen and extend pupils' understanding.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are covered in depth. However the recent changes to the wider curriculum have yet to have an impact on the depth of understanding across a range of subjects, including science, history and geography.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To implement plans to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in science, history and geography.
- Increase pupils' understanding and improve teaching by raising the level of challenge and using more probing questions to deepen pupils' knowledge,
- Ensure that a higher proportion of pupils reach a good level of development at the end of Reception by building on the existing good practice and accelerating children's progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are guided by a deep, moral purpose where success is built upon inclusion, care and support for all its learners. They have ensured that the values of the school are well understood by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils always come first in this school.
- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and governors, has successfully moved the school forward on several fronts since the previous inspection. Her commitment, vision and ambition for her pupils have created a positive learning culture within the school. Parents, pupils and staff speak highly of her leadership, which is ambitious not only for pupils and staff, but for the school community.
- The school aims to 'develop pupils as empowered and independent individuals who can overcome barriers with determination and resilience'. This is deeply rooted in how leaders organise teaching, learning and curriculum. Pupils of all ages respond well to the opportunities they are given to take greater ownership of their learning. They show perseverance in lessons and understand the importance of their education. Comments from staff at local secondary schools acknowledge that the skills and attitudes that pupils acquire at Brook Acre School prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders are highly supportive of their teaching staff. The management of teaching performance and the monitoring of teaching is effective. Staff receive feedback that raises the overall quality of teaching. Professional development, including the use of coaching and mentoring, is closely linked to school priorities and supports teachers to improve their knowledge and skills.
- The induction process for newly qualified teachers is strong. They receive high-quality support and mentoring from leaders and experienced staff in school. As a result, they rapidly develop their teaching skills. They feel well supported. One newly qualified teacher commented, 'I feel part of the Brook Acre family in the short time I have been at this school.'
- Curriculum leaders understand their roles and responsibilities. They are starting to play a valuable role in leading their subject. They monitor standards and support staff development. They regularly report to senior leaders and governors. They are being trained to assess pupil outcomes and check the quality of teaching. Subject leaders have carefully planned new schemes of learning and assessment to deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in science, history and geography. However, plans have only recently been introduced and there is little evidence of the impact of these plans in pupils' work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is well developed. A strong moral code underpins the school's values and these are regularly explored during collective worship and in lessons. Pupils' learning is enhanced through extra-curricular activities. They participate in a wide range of additional trips and enrichment activities which they enjoy. Senior leaders have created a school environment in which all pupils are fully included. Pupils show tolerance and respect in their day-to-day work. As a

result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- All leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have correctly identified the improvements required to further improve the school. The plan is well focused and ensures that key issues are tackled effectively. School leaders regularly check the progress towards their targets and report to the governors.
- School leaders have strong partnerships with other local schools. These partnerships are used effectively to support school improvement. The headteacher's expertise is recognised as she provides guidance to other schools on the use of pupil premium funding.
- Primary sports premium funding is used successfully to enhance the quality of the curriculum provided for physical education and games. For example, the school uses gymnastic coaches to support the development of pupils' skills across the school. As a result, coaching skills of the staff have also developed. The impact of this and other work has led to an increase in pupils' participation in sport.
- The leader of provision for pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities has a very good knowledge of the needs of the pupils across the school. Funding for these pupils is spent wisely and meets pupils' needs. She liaises effectively with parents, pupils, teachers and external agencies to ensure support programmes provide effective help for these pupils. As a result of the high-quality provision they receive, these pupils make excellent progress from their individual starting points.
- Careful consideration is given to ensuring that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively to remove barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have a clear rationale for the allocation of the fund. It is used for a wide range of strategies, including the provision of additional staffing. This ensures that high-quality additional support impacts on outcomes for this group of pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils who are currently in school make good progress.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a strong sense of equality and understand that everyone deserves to be treated well. Systems to deal with instances of poor behaviour are effective. Pupils are confident that they can raise issues with members of staff and that any matters raised would be dealt with properly. Parents agree with this view.
- Parents and pupils are warmly greeted by staff at the start of the day. The school values parental involvement and they in turn value the opportunity to play an active role in the life of the school. Parents are invited to attend assemblies and other school events. Guidance provided by the school helps parents assist their children's well-being and learning. One comment echoed that of many, 'I am very happy with Brook Acre School, my child thrives here and I can't recommend it highly enough.' All parents who responded to the parental questionnaire or spoke to inspectors would recommend this school to others.

Governance of the school

- Governors have helped to create the strong ethos and vision for the school and its community. They have high expectations for the school's continued success and are ambitious for the school and for the pupils.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders. They have a clear

understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They receive detailed information from school leaders and question them about pupils' progress and attainment. As well as providing appropriate challenge to leaders, governors provide good care and support for the staff, pupils and families of the school. They help to make the school a caring, happy community.

- Governors are effective in their roles. Link governors meet regularly with school leaders to gain first-hand information on progress against school priorities. Governors also ensure that funding for pupil premium, sports premium and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make a positive difference to pupils.
- Governors take pupils' safety very seriously and ensure that the school's provision meets requirements. They are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and ensure that they keep up to date with current guidance.
- Governors were not fully aware of their responsibility to make sure information for parents on the school website is accurate and regularly updated. However, action was taken during the inspection to tackle the weaknesses identified by inspectors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors are resolute in providing a safe environment for all. The strong culture of safeguarding is evident in all aspects of school life. The school site is well maintained and secure. The checks made on staff who work at the school meet requirements. All relevant documentation is in place. All staff receive regular training in all aspects of safeguarding and are clear on what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- The headteacher and the deputy designated safeguarding leader have incisive knowledge of individual pupils who are vulnerable or in need. They work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that effective help and support is provided in a timely manner.
- Pupils receive information in lessons and through other activities on how to keep safe. There are lessons, for example, on the dangers of drug abuse and e-safety. The police visit the school to teach pupils the principles of road safety. Safety information is provided on the school website. The school works closely with parents to ensure that their children are safe. Parents' views clearly indicate that the school looks after the safety of their children extremely well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and other staff demonstrate high expectations for pupils' behaviour and a strong work ethic, to which pupils respond by working hard. Pupils apply themselves attentively in learning activities and their work is presented neatly.
- Accurate assessment identifies pupils who are not making sufficient progress and those who need additional challenge. Teachers know their pupils well. They draw effectively on what pupils already know and can do. As a result, they plan experiences for their

pupils that match their abilities and interests.

- Pupils talk fluently and enthusiastically about their learning. They take genuine delight in learning. One pupil explained how she could manage her own learning by choosing the activity with the appropriate level of challenge in any particular lesson.
- Strategies implemented by the school to develop further the quality of teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teacher's subject knowledge was used well to develop pupils' understanding of place value. This is evident in the progress seen in pupils' books, their classrooms and the school's own tracking data. These strategies are also having a positive impact on pupils' skills and attitudes in taking ownership of their learning.
- Teaching assistants and additional adults are very well deployed and make a positive contribution to pupils' good progress. They take part in the planning of teaching and in the assessment of its impact on pupils' progress. Teaching assistants are a real strength of the school and are afforded the same opportunities for professional development as other adults on the staff.
- Teachers are effective in supporting pupils as they learn. They provide helpful advice on what they have done well and what they need to do next to further improve their learning. Questioning is often used effectively to clarify any misconceptions. Occasionally, questions are not sufficiently probing to extend pupils' understanding and do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to deepen their learning.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge especially in reading, writing and mathematics, and can support their pupils effectively, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Strong skills in English and mathematics, though, are not always transferred well enough across the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils' bar charts were poorly drawn, with irregular scales and axes labelled incorrectly. Pupils were therefore unable to use this information to reach accurate conclusions. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to address these issues.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. One pupil explained in detail how the school's system to record achievements had helped him to become fluent in mathematical skills, including recall of number facts.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Pupils are taught how to write for a range of purposes in a variety of styles. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to write imaginatively and at length. There is a well-developed, consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling. Teachers give close attention to accuracy in the use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. They check pupils' work to identify and correct errors.
- These strong skills in English are not always being transferred well enough across other curriculum areas. Pupils' books show that at times pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply their writing skills and to write at length in other subjects.
- The teaching of reading is good. Phonics are taught successfully. Phonics sessions are fast, fun and challenge pupils to think and work hard. Pupils of different ages use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to good effect when trying to read unfamiliar words. Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy reading. Pupils read confidently

and are keen to talk about a wide range of books they have read.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- In this nurturing school community pupils feel very safe. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils understand bullying in its different forms and know how to deal with it if it happens. They show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe because they are taught about topics such as road, water and fire safety and how to keep safe online.
- The emotional well-being of pupils is a high priority for leaders, as they have a clear understanding that this is one of the major barriers to learning for their pupils. Very effective use is made of high-quality additional support through trained leaders. Pupils have opportunities to share their concerns with others. They report that they value these opportunities and use them well.
- Pupils are confident learners with excellent attitudes to learning. They are very enthusiastic and enjoy talking about their work. Pupils listen attentively to teachers, work cooperatively with their peers and persevere when work challenges them. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils confidently say that everyone has the right to be treated well, and demonstrate this themselves by the respect and thoughtfulness they show towards each other and adults. Displays and resources available for pupils to use reflect cultural diversity and celebrate this.
- Parents say that pupils are extremely well looked after by staff at the school and that there are excellent relationships between themselves and staff.
- Pupils are keen to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including: homework club, football, tag rugby, gymnastics, art, science, netball and hockey. This enables them to develop their physical well-being and knowledge of healthy living.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils display a thirst for learning. Pupils value their education and understand its importance, resulting in classrooms that are calm and purposeful. Pupils conduct themselves very well and move around the school in a calm, orderly manner. This is also evident at breaktimes and lunchtime, when pupils play and socialise well, demonstrating a considerate awareness of each other.
- Pupils show respect and thoughtfulness towards each other. They work well collaboratively and share resources generously. They listen to each other's views and genuinely celebrate each other's achievements.
- Attendance is above the national average. Pupils look forward to school, they are punctual and ready to learn. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils and families

understand and value regular attendance. Leaders are aware of vulnerable groups of pupils and support these families very well. They use a wide range of effective strategies to ensure that their attendance is as high as it can be.

- Parents say that behaviour is good and have no concerns about behaviour or welfare.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Inspection evidence shows that pupils build on the good start that they make in the early years and continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they continue into key stage 1 and key stage 2. This means that by the end of key stage 2 pupils have secure core skills in reading, writing and mathematics, which prepare them well for the next stage of their learning.
- The school prioritised reading as an area for development in 2016 and the programme introduced across key stage 2 has had a strong impact on all pupils', and in particular on boys', engagement in reading. The pupils I spoke to said that they now read more books and the more they read, the more they enjoy reading.
- The results of national tests showed that progress was not as strong in 2016 against national averages as it has been in previous years. The unvalidated data for 2017 shows that pupils are making stronger progress than previously, due to raised expectations and more focused teaching. Progress in writing is strong. The proportion of key stage 2 pupils reaching the expected standard in writing and in grammar, punctuation and spelling was above the national average in 2017. Handwriting is well-developed across the school.
- Early indications from the unvalidated data for 2017 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has increased since 2016 and is now above the national average.
- Leaders across the school continue to drive improvements and develop high standards for all pupils. The impact of this has not yet led to outstanding progress across all subjects. The most able key stage 2 pupils have not yet met the raised expectations of the new national curriculum tests.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 that achieve the expected standard in phonics is above that of other pupils who achieve this nationally. Pupils across the school have secure knowledge of phonics, which they apply confidently to their reading and spelling. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books and can talk knowledgeably about them.
- At the end of key stage 2 the 2017 unvalidated data also shows improvement. A greater proportion of pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than in 2016. This is above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the high standard in 2017 is in line with the national average for writing but below the national average for reading and mathematics. Leaders recognised this and have put in place strategies ensuring that the most able pupils are supported to attain the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Early indications show an increase in the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Rates of progress for current pupils are clearly accelerating across the school. School

performance information is reflected in pupils' work, which shows stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- In 2016 key stage 2 progress was significantly below the national average for boys' reading. The school put in place a range of improvements which have led to an increase in the proportion of boys attaining the expected standard in reading in 2017.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent academic and pastoral support. Funding is used effectively to support these pupils. Consequently, they make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupil premium funding is well used to provide effective support for disadvantaged pupils. This ensures that they make rapid progress. As a result of this well-focused support, the differences between disadvantaged pupils' and other pupils' attainment and progress have been diminished. Although in 2016 and in 2017 the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attained the high standard in reading and in mathematics was below national average, greater challenge for the most able disadvantaged pupils has ensured that for current pupils a greater proportion are exceeding age-related expectations in each year group.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall. At times, the progress of these pupils is not as strong as it could be, in particular when teaching lacks the challenge to extend their learning.
- Pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum shows that they are making good progress overall. However, pupils' books show inconsistencies in the way knowledge and understanding is developed in some subjects. There is a lack of depth in coverage of themes in history, geography and science.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of early years are good. Children are assessed on entry to Nursery and their learning needs quickly identified. From starting points that are below typical for their age, there is clear improvement over time.
- The quality of provision enables a rapid start from the moment children enter the Nursery. It is an exciting place to be and captivates the children's interests. Children make good progress.
- Children eligible for pupil premium funding are supported well. The funding is used to provide children with highly effective support in phonics and speech and language development. Teaching is good. Children move freely from one well-defined learning area to another, supported where needed by adults. They express themselves clearly and appropriately because adults spend time talking to them and use questioning effectively.
- Leaders have established systems for gathering data and tracking progress. This provide useful information about trends over time. As a result, leaders recognise they need to remain ambitious for strong outcomes. Children make good progress and outcomes have steadily improved. However, there is still a need to build on the existing good teaching and provision in Nursery and Reception to accelerate children's progress and increase the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the

time they move to Year 1

- In one observed activity in the Nursery, the children try to solve the problem of Bill, the owl, who is stuck up the tree. Children said to each other, 'We could climb the tree', or 'No, you might hurt yourself.' They make good suggestions and then try them out. They have a range of useful resources and know how to use them safely. Children demonstrate confidence and enthusiasm in their learning because adults allow them to lead with their ideas.
- Phonics is taught effectively. The subject knowledge of the teacher and teaching assistants is strong. Activities match individual needs. In one observed lesson, a group of most able children clearly and confidently explained how to form letters and how to break up a word into its individual sounds. Children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write words and simple sentences.
- Effective leadership ensures that the transition between Nursery and Reception is seamless. Children know what to do when they arrive in Reception because adults have quickly established simple but clear expectations. Transition between activities is smooth and trouble-free because children know the routines. Adults model quiet interactions and provide gentle reminders for those who need them. In one observed activity children were captivated by a letter from a character who had arrived in school. As a result, they were attentive and engaged while the teacher provided information about what would happen next.
- The highly stimulating learning environment enables free movement between Nursery and Reception indoor and outdoor environments. A wide range of well-resourced learning opportunities are offered to the children.
- Staff are eager to improve their skills. Their continued professional development is carefully focused on further improving provision. They regularly discuss the outcomes from peer observations to refine their practice.
- All welfare requirements are met and staff demonstrate the same diligence in safeguarding that is evident in the rest of the school. Effective risk assessment enables children to independently explore different learning opportunities and environments and to manage risks safely. Parents feel that their children are safe and happy at school.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their child's learning. Clear advice is given on what to expect from their child at their stage of learning and how they can help their child's progress. Parents commented that they value this information.

School details

Unique reference number	111202
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10036661

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Chuck
Headteacher	Jo Holmes
Telephone number	01925 815827
Website	www.brookacre.co.uk
Email address	brookacre_primary@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The school is situated in an area with high levels of deprivation.
- The pupil population is predominantly of White British Heritage
- There is a high percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is

above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, listened to them read and reviewed some of their work.
- Discussions were held with: the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers with subject responsibilities, five governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met briefly with one parent who had requested the meeting.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Nineteen free-text responses made by parents were considered. Inspectors also considered 26 responses made by staff to Ofsted's survey, 42 responses made by pupils to the pupil survey and a letter sent to inspectors by one of the parents.
- Inspectors examined a range of information. This included information about pupils' attainment and progress, leaders' review of current school performance, minutes from governors' meetings, safeguarding documentation and records of attendance.

Inspection team

Aleksandra Hartshorne, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mavis Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Denah Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector

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