

# The Bramble Academy

Oxclose Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG19 8DF

## Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders, governors and academy trust leaders are making improvements but these have not yet led to consistently good teaching, learning and attendance.
- The guidance leaders give to teachers does not help them precisely enough to improve the teaching for specific groups of pupils.
- Leaders do not check pupils' progress frequently enough to quickly identify and help those pupils who need to catch up.
- The curriculum is not fully effective in helping pupils to understand those from backgrounds different to their own.
- Pupils do not achieve as highly as they should because they do not make consistently good progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write and use mathematics in a range of subjects.
- Some teaching does not build well upon what pupils already know, particularly in writing.
- There is some variation in how well teachers motivate learning. Pupils do not always give of their very best in lessons.
- Teachers do not consistently enable the most able pupils to develop higher-level skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Not all teachers check that pupils understand and can use new vocabulary when they read and write.
- Teachers do not consistently expect pupils to use their phonics skills in reading and writing.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders, governors and staff are committed to improvement and are united in a common sense of purpose.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are improving the quality of teaching. The professional development of staff is supported well by the academy trust.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to improve pupils' learning and social skills.
- Children in the early years achieve well because teaching is good.
- Good pastoral care helps those pupils who need support in their emotional and personal development.
- Pupils said they feel safe. They respond well to the improvements leaders have made to ensure positive behaviour.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that teachers consistently:
  - provide tasks that build well upon pupils' previous learning
  - check that pupils understand and use new vocabulary
  - motivate learning well and encourage pupils to fully apply themselves during lessons
  - give the most able pupils tasks that help them to excel.
- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that the teaching of reading effectively develops pupils' comprehension skills
  - making sure that pupils use their phonics knowledge when they read and write
  - developing pupils' writing skills systematically and ensuring that pupils write more widely across the curriculum
  - providing more activities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and demonstrate reasoning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - checking pupils' progress more frequently so that underperformance is addressed rapidly
  - helping teachers to understand how to improve the teaching for specific groups of pupils
  - extending links with parents in order to raise attendance further
  - establishing effective ways to help pupils to understand multi-cultural diversity.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the school became an academy, plans for improvement have been slowed by leadership and staff changes. Because of this, some improvements have not had sufficient time to embed and ensure consistently good teaching and good rates of progress for pupils.
- Some of the systems used by leaders to check pupils' progress are not monitored frequently enough. As a result, leaders' actions to reduce any underperformance lack the urgency to really speed up pupils' progress.
- When senior leaders check the quality of teaching, they do not focus sharply on the learning of specific groups of pupils, for example the most able. This means that the feedback leaders give to teachers is not specific enough to impact on pupils' learning.
- Not enough emphasis is placed upon teaching pupils about others beyond the school community. This limits pupils' understanding of those from backgrounds and faiths that are different to their own. Consequently, pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. Other aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are adequately promoted.
- The school's work with parents is improving the attendance of the majority of pupils. Leaders continue to improve communication so that parents fully understand the impact of absence on their children's achievement.
- Leaders and staff create a well-ordered and inviting school environment. They expect pupils to behave well and safely. The new behaviour policy is improving pupils' behaviour, with a marked reduction in the number of incidents recorded by the school.
- The headteacher is ambitious for pupils and staff. He recognises staff's strengths and uses their expertise well. Together with the deputy headteacher, he supports the development of teaching and leadership skills and involves all staff in promoting the school's aims.
- The academy trust provides good opportunities for staff training and professional development. This, together with the work of school leaders, is improving the quality of teaching.
- Leaders of the academy trust carry out a regular review of the pupil premium funding to check it is being used effectively and to inform any necessary changes. The headteacher has recently reorganised extra support for eligible pupils, which is having a positive effect on their personal and academic development.
- The additional funding that the school receives for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively. It provides resources and additional adult help that are suitably matched to pupils' needs, leading to improvements in pupils' behaviour and progress.
- Leaders are raising the profile of reading. As a result, pupils' enjoyment is increasing and standards are rising. The thorough evaluation of the mathematics curriculum is addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Subjects are linked together in topics which introduce pupils to key British events and

eras such as the Victorians and Remembrance Day. Current remodelling of the curriculum reflects leaders' recognition that pupils could use reading, writing and mathematics more widely in other subjects.

- The curriculum is enhanced adequately by after-school clubs. Some extra sports activities, such as archery, are funded by the primary physical education and sport funding. The funding is used suitably to increase pupils' participation in sports with other schools and to improve teachers' skills in delivering physical education lessons.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors recognise that they could be more thorough in their monitoring of the school's work. They are currently well supported to improve their skills by governors from another academy within the trust.
- Governors know the school and the local community well. They hold school leaders to account and ask challenging questions about pupils' attendance and achievement. They meet with school leaders and check areas of curriculum development, for example reading.
- Governors know how additional funding is used and the impact it has on pupils' personal and academic achievement.
- Governors work with school leaders on setting the main priorities for improvement. They receive regular updates from the headteacher to help them to check how well the school is doing.
- The governing body carries out its safeguarding responsibilities. Governors, together with trustees, ensure the regular review of policies and site security. They check that the school's systems are fit for purpose.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff receive regular training so they know how to keep pupils safe and what to do if they have any concerns. The school's systems to check adults who work with pupils are thorough.
- Leaders make sure that any child protection issues are systematically recorded and followed up. They have good links with external agencies. Leaders are strengthening communication with parents in order to quickly resolve any concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Teaching in lessons and during assemblies helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe, especially from bullying and when using the internet. The school's records show that incidents of bullying are rare. Any that do occur are dealt with quickly.
- Visitors to the school, such as the local police force, provide extra guidance and help pupils to recognise, and keep safe from, any potential threats such as extremism.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which affect the amount of progress pupils make. For example, some teachers are more skilled than others at making sure that the most able pupils receive work that challenges them to achieve higher standards.
- Teachers do not use what they know about pupils' prior learning precisely enough to build upon pupils' existing skills systematically, for example in writing. This means that, especially for lower-attaining pupils, work over time does not enable pupils to make good progress in consolidating and building upon their basic skills.
- Tasks are not always interesting enough to fully motivate and enthuse pupils. Staff work hard to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge, but there is scope for more activities to stimulate pupils' interest and to encourage them to use their writing and mathematical skills more widely.
- Teachers do not consistently check that pupils understand new vocabulary or help them to use new words frequently and in context. However, all staff have a clear focus on enriching pupils' vocabulary and introduce new words regularly.
- The teaching of phonics is improving. Leaders are ensuring a more consistent approach to teaching, which is helping pupils to make better gains in learning about letters and sounds than previously. However, pupils do not yet routinely use what they know about phonics when they read and write.
- Teachers encourage the enjoyment of reading. They often use stories to develop pupils' writing. For example, during the inspection, the teacher in Year 2 used a winter story as the starting point to extend pupils' vocabulary and grammar. Pupils liked the task and made good progress in recounting the main points of the story.
- In mathematics, staff focus strongly on improving pupils' competence in arithmetic and calculation. They provide suitable resources to help pupils to understand their work. There are some good examples of tasks that encourage pupils to use what they know.
- Teaching assistants frequently work with small groups and with individual pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Their work boosts pupils' confidence and gives them extra help in practising their basic skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement. There are not enough ways for pupils to understand the world beyond the school community and to take an interest in different people's faiths, feelings and values.
- Within the school community, pupils take on small jobs to help their teachers. Some are members of the school council or help out as play leaders at playtimes. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They get on well together and show respect and tolerance towards each other.

- Staff promote pupils' emotional, personal and mental well-being and help pupils to address any issues they may have. Those pupils who attend 'The Bramble Den' make good gains in their personal development, which prepares them to be successful learners.
- Pupils said they feel safe and that bullying is not a problem in their school. Pupils know the different forms that bullying may take. They said the school teaches them how to tackle any problems that may arise and they know who to speak to if they have any worries.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because teaching staff have not ensured that pupils' attitudes to learning are as well developed as they could be. In some cases, pupils do not push themselves to produce their very best. Some do not actively contribute or produce as much as they could during lessons.
- Attendance is below average. However, it is improving due to the school's efforts. Pupils know it is important to come to school regularly and they are keen to receive class awards for good attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is generally good. Pupils said that behaviour has improved because of the school's new rules and behaviour policy, which is consistently applied by staff. Pupils listen in lessons. They respond well to a range of staff, including when attending the breakfast club and when working in small groups.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Although children make a good start in the early years, pupils' progress as they move through the school is not rapid enough for them to reach the standards expected for their age at the end of key stage 2.
- In 2016 and 2017, by the end of Year 6, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was below that seen nationally. This is because these pupils underachieved during their time at the school. Even though they made better progress when they were in Year 6, it was not enough for them to catch up.
- The most able pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are not sufficiently well challenged to reach their full potential. There are some good examples of the most able pupils improving their writing and applying their mathematical skills. However, they do not consistently master higher-level skills such as reading comprehension and mathematical reasoning.
- In 2016 and 2017, disadvantaged pupils did less well than their classmates and were well behind other pupils nationally. More precise use of the pupil premium funding is now helping eligible pupils to make much better gains in their personal and academic achievement than previously.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities develop confidence in their own abilities because of the good support they receive. Their academic progress is improving. They make the best gains when teachers provide them with tasks that allow them to make

small steps in their learning.

- Leaders are addressing the weaknesses in standards. Improvements are speeding up pupils' progress. Pupils who are currently in Year 6 are making more rapid progress and are better prepared for the next stage of their education than previous pupils in Year 6.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Many start school with communication, literacy and numeracy skills that are below those typically expected for their age. Children make good progress in these and other areas of learning and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Staff provide tasks, both indoors and outside, that motivate learning well. They modify the curriculum to suit pupils' needs. For example, staff recognise that boys do not always do as well as girls. As a result, they present topics which stimulate boys' interest in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children behave well and safely because staff make their expectations clear. Children respond very positively to adults and the interesting activities on offer. Tasks stimulate imagination and curiosity. During the inspection, the Christmas theme was used well to encourage children to explore the environment while developing their counting skills.
- Good leadership ensures consistent provision between the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff work together to plan children's learning and share the same methods to check on pupils' progress. There is a clear focus on helping children to move to the next step in their learning.
- Leaders maintain good links with parents and pre-school settings. This helps children to settle well when they start school.
- Additional funding received to support disadvantaged children is being used increasingly effectively. As a result, a greater proportion of disadvantaged children reached a good level of development in 2017 than previously.

## School details

Unique reference number	141398
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10035943

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ann Callaghan
Headteacher	Simon Sharp
Telephone number	01623 635 928
Website	<a href="http://www.bramble.evolutrust.org">www.bramble.evolutrust.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@bramble.evolutrust.org">office@bramble.evolutrust.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The early years provision comprises a Nursery class, which children attend in the mornings, and a Reception class, which children attend full time. The school does not provide for two-year-olds.



- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- This is the school's first inspection since it became an academy in January 2015. The academy is part of the Evolve multi-academy trust. It is managed by a local governing body and a board of trustees.
- Since becoming an academy, the school has experienced significant staff and leadership changes. The current headteacher took up post in September 2016. The deputy headteacher joined in January 2017.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 11 lessons, two of which were seen jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed the teaching of small groups of pupils. In all, 11 members of staff were observed teaching. An inspector also observed an assembly.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across the school. They spoke with pupils about their work during lessons and met with groups of pupils. They listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- The inspectors held meetings with governors, school leaders and staff. Inspectors also met with members of the academy trust, including the chief executive officer, and with the chair of the board of trustees.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to analyse. However, inspectors took account of parents' written comments and also spoke with parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors analysed 22 responses to a questionnaire submitted by school staff.
- The inspectors scrutinised the school's systems and documentation relating to safeguarding. They reviewed information about pupils' attainment and progress, and about their attendance. The inspectors evaluated the school's improvement plans and evidence of its checks on the quality of teaching.

## Inspection team

Viv McTiffen, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Graham Boyd

Ofsted Inspector

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