

Brunswick School

Brunswick Road, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7LX

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Brunswick is a happy and welcoming school. The headteacher has generated a good team spirit among staff. She is well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and is determined to bring about further improvements.
- Governors have the pupils' needs at the heart of all they do. Governors are well informed and provide effective challenge to leaders, holding them fully to account for their actions.
- Leaders and staff ensure that a strong set of carefully thought-out values underpin the work of the school. As a result, pupils feel well cared for, behaviour is good and pupils work hard and strive to do their best.
- Leaders have improved several key areas of the school's performance, including the teaching of reading.
- New subject leaders are increasingly effective. They have been quick to bring about further improvements, particularly in mathematics. However, pupils still do not have sufficient opportunity to develop fluency in mathematics.
- Teachers provide well-planned learning activities that are designed to capture pupils' interest. Good questioning enables pupils to reflect, reason and build on their learning.
- Pupils enjoy a varied and diverse curriculum which offers them many exciting opportunities to learn. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Parents and carers acknowledge and appreciate the care and support provided by the school for themselves and their children. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective.
- Children in the early years settle quickly and make good progress from their starting points. However, as they move into Year 1, some pupils lose their confidence and resilience to have a go at their learning independently of adults.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Outcomes in mathematics and writing at the end of key stage 1 have been weaker in the past, but are improving quickly.
- Leaders and teachers analyse the progress and attainment of pupils. However, this assessment information is not always used consistently to inform teachers' planning. Consequently, not all teaching builds on prior learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and thereby outcomes for pupils, in writing and mathematics by:
 - using assessment information even further to ensure that teaching builds on prior learning and is used to plug gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding
 - ensuring that there is a sharper focus on skills within the mathematics curriculum in order to develop greater fluency
 - ensuring that pupils have more frequent exposure to writing across the curriculum to develop their stamina and writing in an extended form
 - ensuring that transitions between Reception and Year 1 support pupils' independent learning further.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - using assessment information precisely to accelerate progress for those learners who fall behind
 - continuing to embed the role of middle leaders in order that they have a greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is ambitious and determined. She has a clear vision for the future of the school which is shared by staff and governors. She has created a welcoming and friendly school where staff morale is high and pupils are happy and hard-working.
- Senior leaders reacted promptly and effectively to bring about the improvements recommended in the previous inspection. For example, teaching strategies focus on extending the most able pupils. Pupils are now clear about how to improve their own learning. Senior leaders have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas where improvements should be made. The well-considered school development plan addresses the current areas for improvement effectively.
- Senior leaders and governors recognised that pupils' progress was weaker in phonics and reading in 2015 and immediately reorganised the teaching programme for reading. They made good use of external support to train staff further in the teaching of reading. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress in early reading.
- Leaders and governors have recently completed a restructure of staffing across the school due to financial constraints. Governors have addressed these challenges by firmly underpinning a strong strategic vision and plan. As a result, staff have felt well supported and staff morale has remained high. Leaders and governors have maintained a secure focus on improving the school's performance despite these significant challenges.
- Senior leaders have introduced more effective systems to track pupils' progress across the school. Teachers discuss pupils' progress at termly review meetings. As a result, teachers now respond more swiftly to address pupils' underachievement. Nonetheless, the changes to the tracking system are not yet fully embedded across all curriculum subjects to target different groups of pupils. Because of this, some teaching does not consistently build on prior learning, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Middle leaders are relatively new to their posts. They have quickly gained a clear overview of their areas of responsibility. This has enabled them to take actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, subject leaders have introduced new strategies to improve handwriting and raise the level of challenge within the teaching of mathematics. Leaders acknowledge the need to embed the role of the subject leader in some areas. This is so that they can improve further the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is a strength of the school. Most teachers plan carefully to ensure that appropriate knowledge and skills are developed across subjects. The strong focus on mathematics and English is complemented by good work in science, art, music, geography, history and physical education. Nevertheless, leaders acknowledge that pupils need more opportunities to develop their writing skills across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders aim to ensure that the curriculum is highly practical, lively and adventurous. For example, inspectors observed how continual provision was used across the whole school to encourage pupils to prove their understanding through a variety of practical

approaches.

- Good use is made of the pupil premium and special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities funding. Leaders have noted a large increase over the last three years in the numbers of disadvantaged pupils. This, along with higher than average numbers of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, has been a continued focus within the school development plan. Pupils in danger of falling behind are now given well-targeted support so that they catch up quickly. A wide range of strategies are used successfully to support these groups. Senior leaders check the impact of planned support to ensure that it is really making a difference. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The primary sport funding is used well to offer additional clubs and activities both during and after school. It has also been used to provide additional specialist training for all staff to develop their teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, more pupils now take part in a range of different sports. This has had a positive effect on their performance and well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly and contributes to the very positive ethos of the school. Pupils understand and follow the school's values, which underpin celebrating difference, respect, honesty and kindness. Staff consistently promote the use of the 'Brunswick Rucksack' approach to promote an 'I can do it' attitude. Inspectors observed how this was used in teaching to enable pupils to overcome difficulties within their learning. Pupils are well prepared to become responsible citizens. Leaders promote British values well within the school, ensuring that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- The governing body offers strong support to the school and holds senior leaders to account for the impact of their work. Governors are passionate about their roles and are ambitious for the school. They have a wide range of relevant skills and experience. Their skills have been further enhanced with suitable training.
- Governors visit the school frequently. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, so they know the issues to be addressed. They have been relentless in their ambition to improve the outcomes in reading and phonics in Year 1 and Year 2. Governors have received regular monitoring reports that have enabled them to check that outcomes have consistently improved over time.
- Governors work alongside other leaders to gain first-hand knowledge of how the school runs on a day-to-day basis. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions or take decisive actions when they have concerns.
- Governors ensure that the budget is well managed and linked to school priorities. They adjust spending plans to help combat the challenges that the school faces. They ensure that the school's finances are used prudently, particularly that staff pay awards are well deserved.
- Safeguarding duties are taken seriously. Governors attend relevant training, monitor processes and ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed carefully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders, governors and staff keep the safeguarding of children as their top priority. Governors make regular checks on safeguarding arrangements at the school to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- Staff value pupils and listen to them. Pupils are confident that teachers care for them and that they can talk to them if they are ever worried. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. They know that they need to be vigilant for signs that pupils may be at risk and that they must report any concerns immediately.
- The headteacher, as the designated safeguarding lead, knows how to get advice and how to report safeguarding concerns appropriately. Leaders work well with a variety of outside agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and secure, particularly those that are from vulnerable groups.
- All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, or in writing, felt that their children were safe, and they praised the quality of care provided by the school. Parents described the effective way the school has supported their children. One parent described how the nurture and support the school offered 'could not be better'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have established good and warm relationships with their pupils, and manage their groups well. Teaching is lively and enthusiastic and engages pupils. Pupils enjoy the activities that teachers plan for them.
- Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants work as a strong team. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils. As a result, pupils are focused on their learning, listen carefully and follow instructions. Observations of teaching and learning and scrutiny of pupils' workbooks showed that pupils make good progress over time.
- Teachers deliver new concepts clearly, using a range of strategies. They use their good subject knowledge to question pupils skilfully to check their understanding. Careful explanations clarify misconceptions and move learning forward. For example, in mathematics, the teacher questioned and probed pupils' understanding of a measurement problem and helped them to use their skills accurately, ensuring that learning was well developed. Teachers provide guidance on what good work looks like. For example, in writing exercises, pupils have helpful success criteria against which they can evaluate their own work.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and work well with the class teachers to ensure that groups of learners are appropriately supported. Teaching assistants lead small groups, being careful not to over-support pupils so that they remain independent in their work. Such practice contributes strongly to the progress that pupils make.
- Teaching assistants work skilfully with specific pupils, such as those who speak English as an additional language, enabling them to join in fully with lessons.
- The additional support given to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities enables these pupils to make good progress.
- Most parents commented very positively on how effective teaching is on pupils'

learning and progress. Many stressed how helpful and approachable teachers are.

- Pupils are developing a love of reading. Pupils recognise the importance of reading and most read regularly at home and with staff in school. Reading for enjoyment is well promoted. Phonics and early reading are taught well throughout the school. Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to ensure that pupils progress securely and systematically through the early reading scheme. Teachers use a range of strategies to engage learning. For example, children in Reception were observed practising their learning of a new sound by sorting and searching for hidden sounds in a fun activity in the water area.
- Pupils' writing skills are developing well. Pupils write for a variety of purposes and across subjects. Pupils have made good progress in their work through carefully planned activities. Teachers are now insisting on higher expectations, ensuring that pupils always pay careful attention to their spelling, punctuation and handwriting. However, at times, the overuse of worksheets, with small boxes, prevents pupils from writing at length and in greater detail. This is particularly evident when pupils are writing in other subject areas across the curriculum.
- Pupils are becoming keen mathematicians. They engage well when learning mathematics and have many opportunities to count and calculate. Pupils' work in books is well matched to the curriculum and develops their thinking and problem-solving skills. There are times, however, when teaching new skills is not as sharply focused. For example, inspectors observed that some pupils were asked to apply their new learning too soon and had not yet sufficiently developed the fluency of the mathematical processes. Therefore, this slowed pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told inspectors that they are happy at school and that they are keen to learn. They feel safe, get on well with each other and have built up warm and trusting relationships with all adults who work in the school.
- Pupils are extremely well supported because of the individual care and attention that they receive. Pupils place great trust in their teachers to help them if they are worried or having difficulties. They say that there is always someone to go to and 'teachers are there to talk to.' Consequently, any concerns about individual pupils' safety and well-being are quickly identified and follow-up responses are made swiftly. Parents echo this and shared with inspectors their appreciation of the lengths that the school goes to, to support all families.
- Pupils feel very safe and cared for and are unanimous in their views that they enjoy school. They can recall lessons where they have learned about various aspects of keeping safe, including when using the internet. They are aware of bullying. Pupils say that incidents of bullying almost never happen, but if issues do arise, they trust the staff to sort them out quickly.
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities that they clearly enjoy, such as being

members of the school council. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork. Pupils are encouraged through the 'Brunswick Rucksack' to develop self-confidence and resilience. Several parents commented on how much more self-assured their children had become since joining the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- They are polite and courteous and show consideration for one another as they move around the school and at playtimes. In the dining hall, they are well mannered and sociable.
- Pupils understand how to behave in class. They know the school's rules and listen to their teachers. Pupils settle to work quickly and generally persevere with activities. They collaborate well, sharing ideas and resources sensibly.
- The school's information about behaviour is detailed. It shows that there are few incidents of serious misbehaviour, and that the number of incidents of misbehaviour has fallen over the last three years. Parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour at the school is good.
- Pupils like school and attend regularly. However, attendance dropped below the national average last year, mainly due to illness. Senior leaders strive to reduce absence, for example by stressing the importance of regular attendance in assemblies and via newsletters. Consequently, current attendance is now in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Developments in teaching during the past 18 months have improved pupils' learning across the school. Pupils complete good-quality work in English, mathematics and a range of subjects. As a result, standards are rising across the school and pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving expected standards was below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders identified that most pupils at key stage 1, including disadvantaged pupils, made stronger progress in reading and slower progress in writing and mathematics. Leaders have acted decisively to address the slower progress in writing and mathematics. The school's current assessment information shows positive improvements in writing and mathematics in most year groups.
- A significant number of pupils enter the school partway through the year and go into different year groups. The school has a significantly higher proportion of pupils who have significant SEN and/or disabilities compared to other schools nationally. Consequently, the inspectors considered the school's own information on pupils' outcomes as well as published data.
- The school's own information and work in pupils' books show that current pupils are making good progress. In reading, teachers carefully identify and address gaps in learning which lead to focused and successful interventions. However, teachers do not

yet consistently use assessment information in writing and mathematics so that learning fully builds on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

- The proportion of pupils passing the national phonics screening check in Year 1 has steadily increased to be above the national average in 2017. Inspectors found that decoding and word recognition were strengths in pupils' reading, when observing teaching. These improvements are now having a positive impact on pupils' reading skills and enjoyment.
- Children come into early years with skills and knowledge that are significantly below those typical for their age. They face major challenges in their communication and language skills, as well as in their personal, social, emotional and physical development. Children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their very low starting points. The number of children achieving a good level of development is increasing year on year.
- The school tracks the progress of those who have SEN and/or disabilities closely. Because of timely interventions and close working relationships with outside agencies, this group of pupils make appropriate progress and achieve well.
- Pupil premium money is used effectively. Effective teaching and well-focused support enable most disadvantaged pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader is highly skilled and knowledgeable in her role. She has an accurate overview of the strengths and weaknesses of her children. She plans their learning effectively to enable them to make good progress.
- Children in the early years are making a good start at the school. Children enter the Nursery class with standards below those typical for their age. Children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. Interventions are targeted carefully, and as a result children make good progress in their fine motor skills and in speaking and listening.
- Children are polite and confident, eager to talk to adults and each other. They work and play happily together and help each other with their learning. Children take turns and listen carefully to the adults and each other. Children are curious and readily choose from the range of activities on offer that interest them.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and engaging. They share warm relationships with the children and are attentive to their needs.
- Children behave well and listen to their teachers. They settle into school routines quickly and grow in confidence, learning to do things for themselves, such as collecting the resources they need. They usually persevere with activities they have chosen.
- The early years curriculum captures the children's developing needs and interests well. This is supported by the bright and stimulating learning environment. Independent play areas are well set out and reflect the seven areas of learning. There are a wide variety of stimulating activities in which children can participate. For example, in the sand and

water area, children were eagerly engaged with their learning, making independent choices to develop their play.

- Staff have established positive relationships with parents, helping to promote security and consistency in the children's lives. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and are encouraged to contribute to their learning. Advice and support are also given to parents to support them in developing their children's learning at home.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no breaches of welfare requirements.
- Transition arrangements into the Nursery and onwards into Reception are effective. Parents really do appreciate that these arrangements are tailored to suit the needs of each child. However, as children enter Year 1, they find some aspects of this transition challenging, such as increasing their independence and stamina in their learning. Consequently, progress in Year 1 can dip, particularly in writing and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	112117
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10037751

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Pierre Crubilier
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Sanderson
Telephone number	01768 213200
Website	www.brunswick.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	head@brunswick.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 March 2013

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is significantly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of lessons, covering all classes in the school. The headteacher accompanied the lead inspector on some observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and other leaders from across the school.
- The lead inspector also met members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils on the second day of the inspection. The inspection team also talked to pupils about their learning in lessons and at breaktime.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school. Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes.
- Inspectors examined extensively the quality of work in a wide range of books. They discussed pupils' work and their learning with them in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and considered documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and information relating to pupils' achievement and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 35 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and 25 free-text responses.
- Account was taken of the school's own questionnaire to parents. Consideration was also given to the 14 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 16 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Blackwell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Crausby	Ofsted Inspector

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