

# Inspection of a good school: Crackley Bank Primary School

Blackthorn Place, Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 7BE

---

Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

## Outcome

Crackley Bank Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of care, belief, pride and success are at its heart. Pupils learn to care for people and property and believe in themselves. They take pride in their work and know that to be successful, they need to try hard. Pupils say they enjoy school because 'every day is different' and 'lessons are fun and make you want to learn more'.

Staff plan topics that interest pupils and mean something to them. For example, in the topic 'Where did all the miners go?', pupils learned about their local area and how it has changed. However, in subjects such as history and geography, pupils do not learn all that they need to. At the end of key stage 1, too many pupils do not achieve the standards they should, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Staff know pupils well. They are caring and supportive. This helps pupils to grow in confidence. Pupils respect adults and one another. They get on well together and say it is OK to be different. As one pupil explained, 'We respect people for who they are. Everyone is special.' When bullying occurs, pupils and parents know that staff will sort it so that it does not happen again.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Adults in the early years spend lots of time talking with children. This teaches them new words and helps them to express themselves clearly. In Nursery, children learn important skills such as how to share, take turns and put their coat on. They begin to read, write and count. The Reception curriculum builds on these skills.

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. They are quick to recognise when pupils do the right thing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive positive and sensitive support with their behaviour. They have individual targets that help them to get better at the things they find difficult in their learning.

Children begin learning phonics as soon as they start school. Teachers are clear about the sounds that pupils should be able to read. They teach these in a logical order. Most pupils reach the standard they should by the end of Year 1. However, pupils do not get enough practice at the sounds they are learning. Reading books include words that pupils cannot sound out. This makes learning to read difficult, particularly for the weakest readers. In 2019, nearly half of pupils left Year 6 without the reading skills needed for secondary school. In subjects such as history and science, the weak reading skills of low-attaining pupils and some pupils with SEND hold them back. Leaders have recently changed the reading curriculum to improve pupils' reading skills. Teachers now read to pupils each day. For example, Year 3 pupils are thoroughly enjoying 'The Firework Maker's Daughter'.

In mathematics, teachers do not ensure that key stage 1 pupils understand important ideas before moving on to something new. For example, in Year 2, pupils learn to add numbers such as 27 and 42 without understanding the value of each digit. Sometimes there are big jumps between what pupils learn in one lesson and the next. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This makes future learning more difficult. Too many pupils leave key stage 1 without the knowledge and skills they need for learning in Year 3.

Pupils in every class study the same 'learning focus' at the same time. Pupils like this because they can talk about their learning with pupils in other year groups. Pupils enjoy what they do and gain a lot from the trips they go on. However, leaders have not planned the essential knowledge they want all pupils to learn. The knowledge and skills that pupils learn do not build from one year to the next. In science, leaders provide guidance about what pupils need to learn in each topic. However, the content of some lessons does not match this. This means that in some topics, pupils do not learn what they should.

Pupils benefit from lots of exciting experiences. They raise money for local charities and take part in community events. Pupils visit museums and go to the theatre. On residential visits, they have the chance to do things they would not usually do, such as canoeing. All Year 6 pupils learn to play a brass instrument. They showcase their skills in a performance at the Victoria Hall.

The care and support that leaders show pupils extends to the staff. Leaders are considerate of workload and well-being. They look after staff so that they enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know pupils and their families well. They understand the challenges in the local community. Staff teach pupils how to manage some of the risks they might face. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

Staff receive regular training. They are vigilant and report concerns, no matter how small. This builds a picture of what is happening for individual pupils. Leaders follow up concerns diligently. They work with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders signpost places that families can go to for help.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In phonics lessons, teachers do not embed pupils' understanding of how to read and spell new sounds before moving on in their teaching. Reading books are not phonically decodable. As a result, pupils guess at unfamiliar words. Lower-ability pupils, including some pupils with SEND, struggle to read without adult intervention. Staff need training on how to teach phonics well. The books that pupils read at home and school should be phonically decodable and matched closely to the sounds pupils know.
- Key stage 1 teachers do not have a secure grasp of the important mathematical concepts that pupils need to understand to underpin later learning. They do not teach concepts in the right order. Nor do they check that pupils understand what they have learned before moving on to something new. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge and expertise to plan and deliver a coherently sequenced mathematics curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge and skills systematically over time.
- Teachers decide on the content they want to teach in each 'learning focus'. As a result, the knowledge that each cohort of pupils acquires as they move through the school varies considerably. The content of each topic does not build on pupils' prior learning because teachers do not know what has been taught before. Within topics, teachers do not sequence content in a logical order. In different year groups, pupils complete very similar activities. This means that pupils' skills do not develop in the way they should. Leaders should develop a curriculum that equips all pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for the next stage in their education.
- In science, some teachers lack the subject knowledge to plan a curriculum that matches the objectives leaders have set out. This means that in some topics, teachers do not plan and deliver the content they should. In others, coverage of objectives is superficial. As a result, pupils do not build a secure understanding of all aspects of the school's science curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the intended science curriculum is implemented effectively.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good/outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Crackley Bank Primary School, to be good on 25–26 March 2015.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143349
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111719
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sarah Gribbin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sara Stevenson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.crackleybank.staffs.sch.uk">www.crackleybank.staffs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy on 1 October 2016. It is part of the Collective Academies Trust.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher; senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator; subject leaders and teaching staff. The lead inspector met with the chief executive of the Collective Academies Trust. She also met with the chair of the local governing body and two governors.
- The inspector looked in depth at early reading, history and science. In each subject, inspection activities included discussions with the subject leader, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- The inspector also looked at the curriculum in mathematics. She met with the early years leader and observed provision in Nursery and Reception.
- The inspector listened to two groups of pupils read and talked to them about their reading.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. She spoke formally with a group of pupils as well as talking to pupils in breakfast club, in lessons and around school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher about the school's safeguarding procedures. She reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pupils who have left the school. The inspector spoke to pupils, staff and parents about how safe pupils are at school.
- The inspector reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website. She took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- The inspector took into consideration the six free-text responses to Parent View. She spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Claire Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019