

Inspection of Bracken Leas Primary School

Magdalen Meadows, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 6LF

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are keen to be at school. They have fun, learn a lot and always feel safe. They trust all adults to listen and help them. They like thinking hard. They are happy that their teachers 'give them clues', rather than 'just telling them'.

Leaders want pupils to be well-educated and good citizens. Pupils understand that reading, writing and mathematics are important. Pupils say that teachers are good at putting lessons into a 'real-life situation'. They explore interesting issues, such as stereotyping. They remember exciting trips, such as visiting the National Space Centre. Leaders want them to recall more of what they learn in all subjects.

Pupils are responsible house captains and willing science ambassadors. Pupils show they are good sports at cross-country and hockey events. They enjoy clubs such as cooking and gardening. Budding musicians and artists attend orchestra or culture and art club.

Pupils behave well. They earn house points for their team for demonstrating values such as respect. This makes them 'ABLE' (achieve, believe, learn and enjoy life together). They receive merits for excellent work. Pupils said that rules are fair. They rarely break them. Bullying is not a worry for them. Pupils know what is right or wrong.

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

Senior leaders, together with the trust, make an excellent team. They have turned the school around in a short period of time. They have ensured that everyone understands their high expectations. Parents, pupils and staff appreciate the significant improvements to the school. Parents say that it is 'a great school, always wanting to achieve more'. Pupils are now achieving well.

Leaders know the importance of teaching children to read from when they start school. Leaders have set out what sounds pupils should learn and when. Staff receive regular training to keep their subject knowledge fresh. This means that almost all pupils get off to a strong start.

Teachers read exciting books in class. Leaders ensure that the library is well stocked. Authors come in to enthuse pupils. Leaders make sure that reading is always a priority. They have given teachers training to help them teach pupils the skills they need to understand more complex texts. Pupils are more confident to use evidence and answer questions about what they read. This new approach is not yet completely embedded.

Mathematics is well taught throughout the school. Leaders make sure that teachers plan work that deepens pupils' mathematical knowledge. They ensure that lessons build on what has already been taught. Pupils achieve well.

Leaders have improved the curriculum. Pupils enjoy interesting topics, such as 'rainforests'. Leaders have started to write clear plans for all subjects. These include what they want pupils to learn, revisit and remember. In some subjects, this is well established. For example, the art leaders have personal subject expertise. They use this well to support colleagues and make sure that pupils build on what they can already do. For example, teachers demonstrate how to create optical illusions. Pupils use the pencil skills that they gained previously to attempt this.

The trust has provided effective training for curriculum leaders and staff. Some subject leaders have had fewer opportunities to develop their subjects. However, the actions that leaders have taken so far show that clear plans are now in place.

Caring staff ensure that children get off to a strong start in the early years. Children settle well. The Reception spaces are now bright and engaging places to learn. Children are curious learners. They enjoy interesting activities and investigations. For instance, children enjoyed weighing ingredients to make rock cakes. Parents appreciate receiving updates about their child's learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective help and support. Staff plan exactly what pupils need to learn next.

All staff share high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well and want to help others. Older pupils help younger pupils to remember to walk in the corridor or to find someone to play with.

Staff give pupils many opportunities to develop as well-rounded individuals. Pupils fundraise for issues they care about. For example, they were proud to raise money for WaterAid. They take part in residential visits and visits to the theatre. They work with local magistrates to understand the importance of the law. They find out about each other's beliefs.

Staff feel valued and welcome the training and support they receive. They are proud of the part they play in improving the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know that pupils' safety comes first. Leaders and staff know pupils well. They act without delay and with tenacity to make sure that pupils at risk of harm get the help that they need.

Leaders make sure that staff can spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk of abuse. Leaders' safeguarding checks are thorough and records are of a high quality. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know why they should not share personal information on the internet. Pupils learn about road safety, first aid and sharing worries with trusted adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made changes to the teaching of reading. They have identified what needs to improve and have begun to put new systems in place. Pupils learn to decode text effectively but do not yet build on their early fluency as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that their new approach is developed further so that pupils can understand more challenging texts.
- Leaders have established a broad and balanced curriculum that is coherently planned and well sequenced. In some subjects, leaders have ensured that teachers are clear about what pupils should know and remember. This is not yet consistently embedded in all subjects. Leaders' success in improving these subjects indicates that they can bring about this improvement in all subjects within two years. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case.
- Senior leaders have provided a range of appropriate training for curriculum leaders. Some subject leaders are new to their roles. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders continue to develop their roles and support their colleagues in implementing the changes to the curriculum.

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 the school and 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

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| Unique reference number | 144394 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 10121192 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 400 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Karen Falvey |
| Headteacher | Paula Harwood |
| Website | www.brackenleasschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school opened, as part of The Hawksmoor Learning Trust, on 1 April 2017.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader and the chief executive officer of the trust. We met with the chair and two members of the local academy board and the chair of the board of trustees.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, science and art. We visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils reading. We spoke with pupils and teachers about their lessons. We also considered curriculum guidance and the quality of pupils' work in geography.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, the school's plans for improvement and curriculum

planning. We considered information about pupils' achievement from published information and looked at information on the school's website.

- We took account of the 144 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey. There were 37 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Mandy Wilding, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Liz Moore | Ofsted Inspector |
| Helen Atkins | Ofsted Inspector |

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