

Inspection of a good school: Brightwalton C.E. Aided Primary School

Common Lane, Brightwalton, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 7BN

Inspection dates:

6 May 2021

Outcome

Brightwalton C.E. Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want the best for pupils at this small village school. They aspire for them to leave the school with the skills, knowledge and values they need for the future. The school's ethos is rooted in the Christian values of 'wisdom, service, friendship, perseverance and trust'.

Parents speak highly of the school. They value the support their children receive and like the community feel of the school. Activities such as the 'daily mile' bring the school community together. Pupils and staff enthuse about this active start to the day.

Pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and well cared for by their teachers. Pupils say that bullying doesn't happen very often. If there are any issues, pupils are confident that staff sort things out quickly. Most pupils behave well and are polite and respectful. However, there are occasions when a few pupils are not so focused and settled in class.

While pupils benefit from learning a broad curriculum, they do not achieve well in all subjects. This is because the curriculum in some subjects, such as geography, is not yet planned well enough.

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

Leaders have prioritised early reading and most pupils get off to a sound start when learning to read. Phonics teaching starts as soon as children join Reception. Staff have the knowledge they need to teach the school's phonics programme. Teachers articulate and model sounds accurately to pupils. They keep a watchful eye on how pupils are getting on. When needed, teachers provide extra support for pupils. For example, if pupils are at risk of falling behind. Teachers develop pupils' reading fluency and comprehension well during reading lessons. Story times are enjoyable occasions and spark pupils' interest and enthusiasm for reading. Reading books for the youngest pupils are, generally, well

matched to their reading skills. However, this is not always the case for pupils in key stage 1, particularly those at an early stage of reading.

The mathematics curriculum is carefully thought out and pupils achieve well in this subject. Leaders have planned clear sequences of learning from the early years to the end of Year 6. Younger children get a solid grounding in number. This enables them to learn more complex concepts in key stages 1 and 2. Staff give suitable attention to pupils' accuracy and fluency in mathematics. They regularly re-visit mathematical content to help pupils secure their understanding.

Pupils learn a broad range of subjects. However, some subjects, such as geography, are not coherently planned. Leaders have not yet thought carefully enough about the precise content pupils will learn. Pupils' knowledge and skills are not built securely over time. This has resulted in gaps in their understanding. Leaders acknowledge these weaknesses. They are also aware of some weaknesses in other subjects such as design technology. However, their plans to address this are currently at an early stage of development.

In English and mathematics teachers use their subject knowledge to explain things well to pupils. They pose thoughtful questions to clarify pupils' understanding and introduce key learning points. Teachers also use questioning well to identify and address misconceptions in pupils' learning. Teachers make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need in class. They deploy support staff effectively to help pupils with specific needs.

Classrooms are purposeful environments for learning and routines are well established. Most pupils get on well with each other. They say that their learning is not disturbed by other pupils. Even so, occasionally some pupils are not attentive or focused on their learning tasks.

Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities such as leading sports activities. This helps to enhance pupils' social skills and encourages them to be active citizens in the school community. Before the pandemic, the school offered a wide range of extra clubs to cater for pupils' interests. Leaders plan to resume these just as soon as they can. In the meantime, they have provided alternative opportunities such as online county sports challenges. Leaders have also made sure that older pupils can still have a residential experience. Year 6 pupils talked excitedly about their forthcoming overnight camp on the school field.

Staff enjoy working at the school and some have worked at the school for many years. They feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that design technology and history may usefully serve as a curriculum focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They know that if they are ever worried their teachers are there to help them. Staff are alert to any signs of concern. They understand how to report their concerns to leaders. When needed, leaders refer concerns to outside agencies so that pupils and families get the help they need. However, leaders' records of concerns and actions taken are not well organised. Leaders have not ensured that all staff have received up to date regular training. Governors have not maintained enough oversight of this aspect of the school's work.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum content in some subjects is not sequenced well or coherently planned. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to make sure the curriculum in all subjects sets out the content pupils will learn and the order in which they will learn this. Additionally, curriculum leaders need to develop their roles and oversight of the curriculum and ensure that improvements to the curriculum are planned and implemented effectively.
- Reading books for some pupils in key stage 1 are not consistently well matched to pupils' reading skills. As a result, some pupils struggle to maintain fluency and are sometimes tempted to guess at unknown words. Leaders need to implement their plans to ensure that books for pupils at an early stage of reading are more consistently matched to their reading skills.
- Safeguarding record keeping is not well organised. Consequently, leaders do not have a clear enough oversight of concerns over time. Leaders need to make sure that any safeguarding concerns and actions taken are clearly recorded and well organised.
- Leaders and governors have not maintained sufficient oversight of safeguarding systems, including training. As a result, leaders and governors have not ensured that they have fulfilled all statutory requirements or addressed shortcomings in the school's systems. Leaders and governors need to strengthen their knowledge and strategic oversight of safeguarding statutory duties, including training.

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. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

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

Unique reference number	110008
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10192845
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Denise Herrington
Headteacher	Janet Patterson
Website	www.brightwalton.w-berks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and teachers.
- We did deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. We met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- We took account of the 26 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and 18 written comments from parents. We considered the views of staff during meetings with them and took into account the 12 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. We also considered the 61 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

- We reviewed school documents relating to safeguarding and other school documents, including information about the school's curriculum.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Shaun Jarvis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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