

Inspection of a good school: Brimscombe Church of England (VA) Primary School

Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QR

Inspection date: 15 June 2021

Outcome

Brimscombe Church of England (VA) 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?

Pupils are happy, confident learners at Brimscombe. Through the curriculum, they learn to be kind and helpful to each other. Pupils told inspectors that bullying never happens at the school as everyone looks after each other. Pupils feel that staff take great care in promoting their social, emotional and academic progress. The school is inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as other pupils. Staff provide additional support where needed to ensure that pupils learn well. One parent noted in the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire that this is a 'positive, nurturing school'.

Pupils enjoy learning and their learning is enriched by visits such as to the Cheltenham Science Festival and the theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. They know that teachers want them to do well. While the curriculum is adapted to meet most pupils' needs its impact is not as strong in some areas, for example the development of pupils' vocabulary, and in mathematics, pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Pupils behave well throughout the school. At breaktime, pupils play well together. The outside space provides pupils with excellent opportunities to play creatively and collaboratively. Pupils' physical and social development is promoted through building dens among the trees in the large green space. Pupils explore the natural world around them through activities such as tending the apple trees in the school orchard and creating living willow sculptures.

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

Pupils, including children in Reception Year, enjoy reading. Leaders have planned a well-structured early reading programme. This enables pupils in key stage 1 and children in Reception Year to develop strong reading skills. Children in early years develop effective language skills through well-organised activities. This helps them to read texts successfully.

Pupils in key stage 2 read widely and often. Leaders make reading a priority. However, the curriculum does not broaden pupils' vocabulary effectively. As a result, they do not explore themes and characters in texts in depth.

Pupils write well in all year groups. Leaders and teachers have planned an effective approach to writing. Pupils craft words and sentences well to suit the audience and purpose they are writing for. In Years 5 and 6, pupils redraft their writing with care and consideration. Pupils in key stage 2 take pride in their work and their handwriting is well formed. In Years 1 and 2, pupils were observed writing descriptive sentences well in response to the book they have read, 'The Way Back Home', by Oliver Jeffers.

Leaders have not planned an effective mathematics curriculum. Although all pupils practise addition, subtraction, multiplication and division daily, they do not all have opportunities to apply this knowledge to reasoning and problem-solving. Therefore, some pupils do not develop strong mathematical knowledge that prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

Leaders and staff support pupils with SEND well. Teachers and teaching assistants plan support that is bespoke to pupils' needs. These pupils are fully included in the life of the school and do well.

Leaders and teachers use assessment well to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in most areas of the curriculum. They use this information to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. For example, some pupils who did not consistently access remote learning during lockdown have gaps in their knowledge of certain subjects. Leaders have provided additional support for these pupils to help them succeed.

Children in early years explore imaginary worlds through well-structured activities. This enables them to practise their language well with each other. They develop strong social skills through collaborative play. Children's physical development is also well developed through a range of resources and activities.

Governors pose effective challenge and support to leaders. They share leaders' vision for all pupils to succeed emotionally, socially and academically. They are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a good education. Staff unanimously state that they are proud to work at the school. They state that leaders are mindful of their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that mathematics may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders and staff ensure the physical and emotional well-being of pupils at all times. Leaders work with external agencies effectively to safeguard pupils. However, the school's system for recording safeguarding concerns is not as robust as it should be.

The school's checks on adults who work at the school are rigorous. Pupils learn how to keep safe when online. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they felt protected and cared for by staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school that ensures that pupils are safe. However, the system for recording staff's concerns about pupils is not robust. Leaders need to ensure that the recording of safeguarding concerns is consistently detailed and thorough.
- The mathematics curriculum does not enable all pupils to develop effective reasoning and problem-solving skills. Leaders need to ensure that the mathematics curriculum is coherently structured to enable all pupils to learn more and remember more.
- Although pupils learn to read well and enjoy reading for pleasure, the curriculum does not broaden their knowledge of vocabulary well. Leaders need to ensure that the English curriculum develops pupils' language skills so that they can analyse themes and characters in texts in depth.

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. 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 15–16 March 2016.

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 [here](#).

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	115690
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10193367
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rod Harris and Simon Jarvis
Headteacher	Joe Roberts
Website	www.brimscombe.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Brimscombe Church of England (VA) Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of early reading, mathematics, English and science. Inspectors discussed curriculum

design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited.

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector spoke virtually with the chair of governors and met with three governors.
- The lead inspector spoke virtually with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of 10 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the 45 free-text comments.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. Sixty-one pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Marie Thomas

Her Majesty's Inspector

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