

Inspection of a good school: Castle Bromwich Junior School

Hurst Lane North, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, West Midlands B36 0HD

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 November 2021

Outcome

Castle Bromwich Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and happy school. Pupils are safe and develop positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and the opportunities provided to develop new skills, such as learning to play the guitar.

Leaders, governors and staff care deeply about pupils. They want the best for them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get a good deal. Rigorous systems are in place to ensure that any specialist support needed is accessed quickly.

Most pupils behave well. They are very clear about what happens if someone is unkind or does not behave as they should. Staff encourage and support pupils to resolve their disputes through discussion. Pupils know the difference between bullying and 'falling outs'. They say that adults deal quickly with any problems they report.

Staff have worked hard and been successful in gaining many national and prestigious awards including in art, physical education, and inclusion of pupils. These awards recognise that all pupils get a rich and varied programme of activities at school.

The headteacher has created a strong and united staff team. Governors are dedicated and committed. They make sure that teachers and leaders are well supported and have a good work-life balance.

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

Leaders and staff have created an ambitious and well-balanced curriculum. A full range of subjects are taught. Pupils learn content in a logical order. Teachers assess pupils' abilities in English and mathematics when they join the school and as they move through the school. They use this information effectively to detect where gaps exist and revisit content where needed. Leaders developed an effective system to continue delivering the curriculum during the COVID-19 national lockdown periods. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge were minimised.

There is some variability in how well curriculum plans are delivered. Sometimes, too many concepts are introduced or the learning focus is unclear. This confuses pupils. Some content is not taught in line with the school's expectations, or there is a lack of regular teaching. This weakens the impact of the planned curriculum. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding, and some cannot remember what they have learned.

Reading is given a high profile in the school. All pupils use the school library and take home books. Pupils read regularly at home and school. When they join the school, Year 3 pupils have phonic lessons. This ensures that every pupil has the skills needed to become a confident and fluent reader. Phonic teaching and adult support continue for the weakest readers in all year groups. This aids their progress. 'Book Worms', classroom door decoration competitions and school events all act as incentives and promote a love of reading.

Pupils can use different styles and can write for different purposes. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not high enough. They provide too much support. Pupils have limited opportunities to write at length or write in different subjects. This reduces their ability to write or construct their work independently.

Pupils with SEND receive effective adult support and additional teaching where needed. Leadership of SEND ensures that teaching staff are held accountable for pupils' progress. Tailored programmes for individuals are reviewed and monitored closely. Detailed evidence is gathered and submitted to external panels. Strong record-keeping ensures that requests made for specialist support are successful.

Leaders prioritise pupils' wider development well. They ensure that trips, performances and fundraising events broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils readily take on roles and responsibilities. They learn to respect and value each other and look after the school and local environment.

Leaders and governors are mindful of staff workload. The number of assessment periods per year have been reduced and staff are trialling different ways to mark pupils' work. Governors have reduced the number of meetings senior leaders must attend to improve work-life balance.

Overall, procedures to monitor attendance are effective. However, too many pupils are persistently absent. This creates gaps in their learning and has a detrimental impact on their achievement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training so that they know how to recognise signs of abuse. The safeguarding leader is quick to follow up any concerns. Leaders work closely with families and other professionals to ensure that pupils are safe. They check that adults working in

school are suitable to do so. Pupil safety is of paramount importance to all adults and is taken very seriously.

Pupils receive important safety messages in assemblies, lessons and from visitors to the school. Pupils learn about online safety, road safety and how to cycle safely. Pupils share any concerns with a trusted adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- All subjects are well planned and sequenced. However, there is variability in the quality of curriculum implementation in some subject areas. As a result, pupils struggle to develop the knowledge needed and commit their learning to long-term memory. Leaders should check that plans are implemented effectively and as intended so that pupils acquire and retain the key knowledge and skills that leaders have identified in all subjects.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Staff provide too much support. This limits pupils' opportunities to learn to construct and compose their work independently and write at length. Teachers should increase the opportunities given to pupils to write regularly in different subjects.
- Too many pupils continue to be persistently absent. This was an issue before the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, pupils miss crucial lessons, which affects how well they achieve and how well equipped they are for secondary school. Leaders should continue to target and support those families who do not recognise the value of regular attendance for their children to reduce persistent absence.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 Castle Bromwich Junior School to be good in September 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 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	104066
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10200035
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	477
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Paul Jackson
Headteacher	Sarah Hobden
Website	www.cbjs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has been restructured. There are now two deputy headteachers in school rather than a deputy and assistant headteacher.
- The English leader and the special educational needs coordinator are specialist leaders for education in their subject areas.
- The school is part of the Unity Teaching School Alliance and part of the Northern School Collaborative in Solihull.
- The school uses one alternative provider which is registered.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff. The inspector held a meeting with three members of the governing body, including the

chair of governors.

- Deep dives were carried out in reading, mathematics and modern foreign languages. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. The inspector also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects and watched pupils read to a staff member. The inspector also looked at planning and a range of pupils' work in art, design technology and religious education.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement and curriculum plans, and the school website. Minutes of governors' meetings and reports from external advisers were also checked.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector considered the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff training and the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. She considered responses, including free-text comments, to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire. The inspector took account of responses to the staff questionnaire and responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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