

# Inspection of The Bramble Academy

Oxclose Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG19 8DF

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The quality of education is not good enough at this school. In some subjects, including in reading, the curriculum is not taught well enough throughout the school from the early years. This means that pupils do not gain the knowledge and skills they should over time, including pupils who struggle to read.

Leaders create a calm and orderly environment in the school. Pupils, generally, behave well. Pupils told inspectors that staff keep a careful eye on whether there is any bullying. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with any bullying quickly and effectively. Most pupils say that they feel safe.

Leaders promote the core values of 'Ambition, Integrity, Inclusivity, Endeavour, Resilience.' Pupils understand these values. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in regular 'Shout-outs' on the playground.

A range of clubs help to broaden pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. Pupils' knowledge of British values, including democracy, is not strong enough.

Most parents are positive about the school. However, a significant minority of parents told inspectors they have concerns about staff turnover. Some parents would like their concerns to be dealt with properly. Other parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not feel supported by leaders.

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

Over time, leaders have not ensured that the quality of education is good across the school. There is inconsistency in how leaders and teachers plan and deliver learning across the different subjects. In many subjects, curriculum plans have recently been revised. For almost all subjects, leaders have set out in curriculum plans what they want pupils to know and remember, from the early years through to the end of key stage 2. However, teachers do not always have the necessary knowledge to identify how best to teach concepts, so that pupils build their knowledge over time. For example, in art, sometimes, pupils create complex pictures before they understand line and tone well enough. In mathematics, not all teachers routinely resolve pupils' knowledge gaps or misconceptions before introducing new learning.

Phonics is not taught well enough. Teaching is inconsistent between year groups. The training staff have received has not ensured that they teach reading effectively. Books do not match the sounds that pupils know. Some pupils told inspectors that their books are too hard. Some pupils guess when attempting to read unfamiliar words. These pupils have too many gaps in their phonic knowledge. There is no extra support for those pupils who struggle to read.

Leaders provide subject specialists from within the multi-academy trust to support teachers in some year groups. The leader for mathematics, for example trains staff. The leader for art checks that children's work in the early years prepares them for learning in key stages 1 and 2. The subject specialists know how the teaching of their subjects needs to improve. They are helping teachers to improve how they teach the different subjects and how they assess what pupils know and can do. This specialist support is not across all year groups in all subjects.

The quality of education in the nursery and early years has some strengths. Relationships are positive between children and adults. Staff ask questions which develop children's vocabulary. The environment is very engaging for children. The curriculum prepares children for learning they will encounter later in the school. However, the teaching of phonics does not help children to read well enough in preparation for Year 1.

There is variability in how well the needs of pupils with SEND across the school, including the early years, are identified, assessed or met. Not all staff successfully adapt the curriculum well enough for pupils with SEND. These pupils do not always benefit from a good quality education.

Pupils know how to eat healthily, maintain an active lifestyle and keep physically and mentally healthy. Some pupils' understanding of different faiths and British values is weak.

Leaders use effective strategies to improve attendance. Vulnerable families receive support so that their children attend regularly. Staff provide a 'walking bus' to help pupils get to school.

The new headteacher is starting to bring about improvement. This is most notable in pupils' behaviour and in the subject-based training staff are beginning to receive. School leaders consider staff well-being. They engage with staff and take account of their workload.

Support for the school's leaders from the multi-academy trust has not brought about sufficient improvement since the previous inspection. Trustees do not hold leaders to account well enough, including over the quality of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe online. Staff receive regular training and know how to record concerns about vulnerable pupils. Leaders provide support to vulnerable pupils and their families. They keep comprehensive records and act quickly when they have a safeguarding concern. Leaders work well with external agencies. They have a strong awareness of issues in the local community, which may affect their pupils' welfare. They ensure that staff are aware of these issues and know how to support pupils when it is necessary. Leaders have ensured

that they provide support to pupils and their families, including through the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

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

- Leaders are not providing a good enough quality of education. The curriculum is not implemented well enough. Across the curriculum, almost all plans for learning identify the important knowledge pupils need to learn from the early years to Year 6. Not all teachers routinely implement these plans to ensure that pupils have the knowledge they need to complete complex tasks or learn new concepts. This can lead to teachers planning lesson activities which do not provide pupils with the opportunities to acquire the knowledge that they need. Additionally, not all teachers routinely check pupils' understanding before introducing new learning. This can limit how well pupils build their knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that teachers know what to teach and when, and how to check pupils' understanding effectively, so that pupils develop the necessary knowledge and skills in all subjects.
- Across the school, pupils who struggle to read have reading books that are too hard. They do not receive enough support to help them to become confident readers. As a result, these pupils struggle to become confident readers who can read unfamiliar words and access the curriculum. Leaders should make sure that pupils who struggle to read receive the support they need to become confident and fluent readers.
- Not all staff successfully adapt the curriculum well enough for pupils with SEND. Leaders have not established rigorous systems to identify, assess and meet these pupils' individual needs. As a result, pupils with SEND do not always benefit from a good quality education. Leaders should make sure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need, including through adaptations to the curriculum, so that they achieve as highly as they should.
- Some pupils' understanding of different faiths and British values is not good enough. As a result, pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be. Leaders should ensure that the wider curriculum enables pupils to understand the fundamental British values and different faiths and beliefs.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141398
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire County Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200028
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery/Infant/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>	169
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	John Dryden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Natalie Aveyard
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bramble.evolutrust.org">www.bramble.evolutrust.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 January 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Evolve Trust in January 2015.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, curriculum leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, and a sample of teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and spoke with another trustee on the telephone. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer and the director for school improvement of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading; mathematics; art; and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including improvement plans, leaders' self-evaluation and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader and scrutinised examples of safeguarding concerns. He looked at the safeguarding policy, single central record and training records.
- Inspectors considered the 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and the 19 responses to Ofsted's free-text service, they also considered the responses to the staff survey and the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Damien Turrell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

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