

Inspection of a good school: Bredgar Church of England Primary School

Bexon Lane, Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8HB

Inspection date:

12 January 2022

Outcome

Bredgar Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school and are happy to tell visitors why. When asked, some older pupils found it hard to identify what could be better, agreeing that 'mostly, this is a great school'. They also said that they feel that all staff are supportive and that teachers 'expect a lot'.

Pupils behave well here. They told inspectors it is easy to make friends. One pupil who joined the school recently was keen to relate how other pupils had been kind to her when she arrived. Other pupils said that bullying is not a problem in this school, and that staff are friendly and always there to help.

Despite the negative impact COVID-19 has had on school life in the recent past, pupils talk avidly about trips out of school, including a recent visit to the beach to build 'Mayan sandcastles' and learn about 'sea creatures'. Older pupils also talked excitedly about stargazing nights and the Year 6 residential trip which they hope will take place later this year.

The large majority of parents are positive about the school. They value what they see as the family-centred and caring ethos it promotes.

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

Since taking up their substantive roles in September 2021, the headteacher and her deputy have redoubled their work to improve the quality of the school's curriculum. Much has been done in a short period of time. Care has been taken to protect the benefits that a small school with mixed year groups bring, while ensuring that the curriculum maintains its breadth and that pupils experience rich learning experiences as they move through the school.

New leadership, including at a strategic level through the multi-academy trust, has brought fresh opportunities for teaching staff to widen and develop their professional

skills. This includes as curriculum leaders, where work is under way to strengthen the impact that subject leadership has on the way the curriculum is delivered, including in early years. This work is also key to ensuring that all staff benefit from sharing good practice and the specialist subject knowledge that exists within the school, or across the multi-academy trust.

The school's work to teach pupils to read is successful, although in the past older pupils have not had as much exposure to a wide breadth of genres or as rich a reading experience as leaders want. While children in Reception and key stage 1 enjoy their phonics lessons and talk excitedly about the books they are reading or have read, this enthusiasm is lacking in some older pupils. Some find it hard to discuss or remember what books they have read in the past, either as a class or individually. While new initiatives are in place to address this, more needs to be done to ensure that a strong culture of reading for pleasure is developed and firmly embedded across the school, particularly in key stage 2.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. Classroom visits showed pupils engaging well with mathematics, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work well as a team to support pupils with SEND. Expectations are high, with careful consideration given to ensure that pupils who struggle can access additional resources and support when needed. This is also true in Reception, where children are already expected to explain and justify their answers as well as use and understand key mathematical language in their lessons.

Leaders have ensured that pupils access a full curriculum at Bredgar. Subject-specific knowledge is taught well, while using a topic-based and thematic approach to learning. This is the case across the curriculum, including in history, for instance, where in one classroom visit older pupils were enthusiastic about considering key historical facts, not least because of the passion of the teacher delivering the lesson.

Pupils enjoy the school's wider curriculum offer, which is underpinned by a strong Christian ethos. Specific wisdom and well-being lessons develop pupils' understanding in areas such as physical and personal safety, mental health, and getting along and understanding others. Additional timetabled enrichment activities focus on community cohesion and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. These include learning in an age-appropriate way about aspects such as understanding difference and promoting equality.

Staff work well as team. Despite leaders introducing recent changes that are still embedding, staff are positive about working at the school. The staff survey was particularly telling in this aspect, where all staff who responded felt that they were treated fairly and with respect.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture to safeguard pupils is strong here. Leaders at all levels, including those in positions of governance, take their responsibilities to protect the welfare, health and

safety of pupils and staff seriously. Appropriate checks are carried out on adults visiting or working at the school. All staff attend appropriate training and are regularly updated about issues which may impact on pupils. Staff act quickly when they have concerns and have confidence in leaders to take action when required.

Pupils feel safe in school. Parents and staff are equally positive about the school's work to safeguard pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all pupils value and enjoy books or are as keen about reading as they might be. This is especially the case for older pupils, some of whom are not overly eager to read widely or for pleasure. While this is partly due to a legacy issue, leaders need to make this a priority in their plans to improve the school. This will mean that the current high levels of enthusiasm for books and reading clearly established in some parts of the school become the norm throughout, further broadening and enriching the experiences and life chances of all pupils at the school.
- Leadership of specific curriculum areas is not as developed as it might be. Senior leaders have started a programme to develop subject leadership across the curriculum. This work should be accelerated, so that subject leaders can have a greater impact on improving the curriculum. This will mean that the quality of education the school provides will improve further, and that teaching staff will benefit from specialist advice to develop their subject knowledge and expertise.

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 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, of the same name, to be good in February 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 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

Unique reference number	144868
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10203165
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Stewart
Headteacher	Karen Godsell
Website	www.bredgar.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bredgar Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in August 2017. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected under Section 8, it was judged to continue to be good.
- When the school first converted to become an academy, it joined the Potential in Everyone Academy Trust. In June 2021 the Potential in Everyone Academy Trust merged with the Village Academy Trust to become Our Community Multi Academy Trust (OCMAT). Governance is provided by the trust and by a local monitoring council with delegated powers.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their substantive positions at the school in September 2021. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher hold the same positions at another school within OCMAT, with their duties spread equally between both schools.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, and teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of the local monitoring council. He also held separate online meetings with a representative of the Diocese of Canterbury, and with the chair, chief executive officer and two officers from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils' knowledge over time. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to an adult from the school.
- The lead inspector met formally with a representative group of pupils to gather their views about the school.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors assessed the school's culture to keep pupils safe. A wide range of documentation was considered, including policies and safeguarding records. The single central record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors also gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload. Staff and parent surveys were also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Ellison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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