

Inspection of a good school: Brackley Church of England Junior School

Manor Road, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 6EE

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

Brackley Church of England Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Brackley Church of England Junior School. They are well motivated and enjoy challenging lessons. Pupils work hard and speak with confidence about what they have learned in a range of subjects.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations staff place on them. They are attentive in lessons and conduct themselves well around school. Staff help pupils to reflect on their actions and learn to resolve issues, such as falling out with their friends. Pupils say that unkindness or bullying does occasionally happen, but staff educate pupils so that they do not repeat their mistakes.

The wide range of opportunities available for pupils is getting back to normal. A variety of clubs have recommenced and pupils say that there is something for everyone. Pupils are proud to represent their school at sporting events. They enjoy trips to deepen their understanding of what they are learning in the curriculum. On these special days, they experience being a wartime evacuee or learn more about space and modern advances in technology.

Everyone is proud of the school's Christian ethos, which threads through the life of the school. Pupils and staff try to live out the school's key values of being 'a caring, celebratory, Christ-inspired community, rooted in love'.

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

Leaders have set out an ambitious curriculum. They have identified the most important knowledge and skills they want pupils to know. Pupils build on what they learned at the infant school. Leaders work with external providers to strengthen learning in some areas, such as food technology.

Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They have organised the curriculum so that it builds on what pupils have learned before. Teachers plan activities

that enable pupils to practise new skills and deepen their learning. For example, in art, pupils are confident with drawing and using watercolours. Year 6 pupils know how to use a vanishing point to create a three-dimensional perspective. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember. Pupils receive extra help to keep up when necessary. In mathematics, for example, they revisit essential knowledge before the main lesson commences. Some of the curriculum sequences are newer than others. In these subjects, pupils recall less.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Pupils read every day. Staff know how to help pupils understand what they have read. Leaders check on the progress that pupils are making. They provide extra support for pupils who are not confident readers. Leaders recognised that some younger pupils had weaker reading skills. They introduced daily phonics lessons to help pupils catch up. Leaders purchased new books to make sure that pupils read ones that match the sounds they know. Most pupils have caught up, but a small number of pupils still need more help. Staff appreciate the training that they have had. However, not all staff have the subject knowledge that they need to give some pupils exactly the right help at the right time.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that these pupils have the support they need to access the full curriculum and achieve as well as they might. Staff know how to adapt their teaching to support them well. Pupils with more complex difficulties receive expert help.

Pupils' personal development is embedded throughout the curriculum. Staff encourage pupils to respect others, irrespective of their background. Pupils show great interest in learning about different religions and cultures and what is happening in the world. They enjoy thinking about big questions in assemblies, such as why girls should go to school or what forgiveness means. Pupils are thoughtful and are proud of their charity work. They have missed having opportunities to hold roles of responsibility. Leaders are gradually reintroducing these.

Leaders care about the well-being of staff. They make sure that expectations for planning and assessment are manageable. Staff feel valued and pull together to overcome challenges, so pupils can continue to progress well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school and pupils' welfare is a priority. Leaders make the necessary checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils. All staff receive the right training to recognise when a child might be at risk. When staff report a concern, leaders follow this up straightaway and refer to the relevant agency when necessary. They work with other agencies to ensure that families get appropriate help.

The curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge they need to stay safe in different situations, including when online. Pupils know to report their worries to a trusted adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum is not yet fully embedded. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders should complete their work to ensure that the order and breadth of curriculum content are well sequenced and allow pupils to develop a deeper subject knowledge. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Not all staff have the subject knowledge that they need in order to help a small number of pupils at the early stages of reading to catch up. Some pupils do not get the help that they need to help them to decode words and read texts fluently. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the support they need to identify the sounds that pupils do not yet know. They should make sure that staff have the expertise to support pupils to fill these gaps in their phonic knowledge and become fluent readers.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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	121961
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10227854
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Sinclair
Headteacher	Rosalyn Peet
Website	www.brackleycofejuniorschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Peterborough. The religious character of the school was inspected in November 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff and pupils. The inspector spoke with three representatives of the governing body.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the written comments from parents and carers. The inspector also spoke with several parents.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector spoke with parents and pupils. She scrutinised documents that the school keeps and spoke with leaders and staff.

- The inspector took account of responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and art. Inspection activities included discussion with curriculum leaders, scrutinising curriculum plans, lesson visits and discussions with both teachers and pupils about learning. The inspector also looked at plans for other curriculum subjects and spoke with the subject leaders, along with checking the school's website.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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