

Inspection of a good school: Browney Primary Academy

Harle Street, Browney, County Durham DH7 8HX

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2022

Outcome

Browney Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Browney Academy's motto, 'Small school, big heart', is central to school life. Pupils love coming to school. They feel happy and safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils thrive with the high level of support given to them. The pastoral team, made up of specially trained staff, helps pupils to express their feelings. Pupils trust the adults and share their concerns with them. This means pupils can focus more fully on their learning.

There are many pupil groups involved in the life of the school. Pupils are very proud of the responsibilities they volunteer to take on such as eco and school councillors. Through these roles, pupils become confident and articulate in presenting their ideas to others.

Leaders are passionate that all pupils have the best possible start in education. Children thrive in early years. Staff know all pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and adapt the teaching to meet individual needs.

The school is a calm place where pupils are well behaved. Pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations for behaviour. Bullying rarely happens and pupils are certain it would be dealt with if it did.

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

The number of pupils attending Browney Academy has increased significantly in recent years. Leaders have reorganised the curriculum and school staffing to accommodate this. This means some subject curriculums have been refined or are quite new. As pupils have moved from different schools, some have gaps in their learning from studying a different curriculum. Pupils new to school settle in quickly. Friendship buddies help them to understand the expectations in behaviour and learning.

Leaders invested in a new highly structured phonics programme to teach early reading. This starts in Reception Class. Pupils enthusiastically join in phonics lessons and learn

more quickly than they did previously. Staff check pupils' learning and provide extra catch-up lessons for those who need them. All staff use the same techniques in phonics lessons. Teachers make a direct link between reading and spelling. This helps pupils to learn and remember spellings. Pupils have a love of reading. Practices such as reading to 'Amber' the therapy dog encourage pupils to read more. Many attend 'Rise and Read', a breakfast reading club.

Subject leaders are passionate and knowledgeable about the curriculum area they lead. All subject leaders monitor their curriculum area, noting strengths and weaknesses. Training and coaching further develops all staff, particularly those new to school. The goals and ambitions of the curriculum are clear. However, teachers are at different stages in putting the desired curriculum into action. Some pupils struggle to understand some of the new learning.

Well-developed plans are in place with targeted support to help pupils with SEND achieve the best they can. All pupils are fully included in all curriculum activities. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that referrals are made to partner agencies for those who need additional support. Leaders learn as much as possible about children transferring into school. They work with parents and services to ensure a smooth transition.

Children in the early years blossom in the well-considered learning environment. There are many opportunities to practise the skills taught by their teacher. All staff model learning activities and interact well with children. As a result, children are very confident in their learning.

Leaders ensure that the school's behaviour procedures are clearly understood by all. Pupils are polite and positive towards one another. Leaders identify the barriers that affect pupil attendance and punctuality. There are now fewer pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Pupils talk with confidence about British values. The school curriculum ensures that pupils have a range of visits to places such as the Centre for Life. However, some pupils have some misconceptions about life in modern Britain. Some pupils also confuse basic information about the major world faiths. Whole-class books/texts support pupils in developing an understanding of diversity.

Senior leaders promote everyone's mental health and well-being. Pupils have an excellent understanding of their own mental health needs, and those of others. They have sessions on 'mindfulness', during which they can reflect on their emotions. Pupils benefit from counselling and the therapeutic support provided by the staff team.

The governing body uses its considerable expertise. They actively challenge senior leaders and hold them to account. Leaders have created a highly positive culture among the whole staff team. Staff appreciate that leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure all staff are trained to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. There is a clear process in place to report any concerns. Leaders work with partner agencies and other schools to provide pupils and families with the support that they need.

Leaders follow a rigorous recruitment process to make sure any new member of staff is fit for their role. This includes criminal record checks.

Pupils learn how to recognise risks. Online safety is threaded through the computing curriculum. Visitors from the emergency services teach pupils about water safety and everyday dangers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A significant number of pupils have transferred from other schools in recent years. Leaders have identified gaps in the learning of these pupils. Leaders should ensure that the quality of the curriculum offer remains as strong as the school continues to expand.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 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.

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	140359
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10211356
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	176
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Amanda Moon
Headteacher	Catherine Harris
Website	www.browneyacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2017

Information about this school

- This school is part of the North East Learning Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- There has been a change in senior leadership since the last inspection. The new deputy headteacher commenced their post in September 2021.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator, and met with representatives of the local academy council.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils work. The inspector also looked at curriculum documentation for these and other subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022