

Inspection of a good school: Tarleton Mere Brow Church of England Primary School

The Gravel, Mere Brow, Preston, Lancashire PR4 6JX

Inspection date:

8 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils are made to feel welcome at this school. Pupils get on well together irrespective of any differences. They benefit from the positive relationships that they have with staff and with each other. Pupils receive high-quality care and support. They said that they feel safe and happy at school.

Leaders' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are rising. Typically, pupils achieve well in some subjects. However, over time, they have not achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6. Some current pupils continue to underachieve in these subjects. This is particularly the case for pupils in key stage 2, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. Children in the early years learn to take turns and to share. When there are occasional fallings-out, pupils know that adults will help them to resolve their disagreements. Leaders and staff deal effectively with any bullying.

Pupils are encouraged to develop their wider interests and talents. Older pupils learn to play musical instruments. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they have to represent their school in sports competitions, such as cross-country running.

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

Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced. It is increasingly ambitious for pupils, including children in the early years. However, for some time, pupils have underachieved in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, the pupils who left Year 6 in 2022 did

not fare well in the national tests and assessments. They were not well prepared for their move to secondary school. Some of the pupils currently at the school, especially those in Years 3 to 6, have wide gaps in their reading, writing and mathematics knowledge. This is as a result of weaknesses in the previous curriculums for these subjects.

Leaders have taken some action to remedy the weaknesses in pupils' achievement. For instance, they have introduced a new curriculum for mathematics. However, this is not currently having sufficient impact on the older pupils in the school. This is because teachers have not had enough time to pinpoint exactly where pupils have missing learning. Consequently, some older pupils do not have firm foundations on which to build new knowledge. Conversely, children in the early years get off to a stronger start in mathematics now. These children are benefiting from leaders' new approach to delivering the mathematics curriculum.

Leaders are also prioritising reading. Children in the Nursery class enjoy an early introduction to sounds through songs and nursery rhymes. From the Reception Year, leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. While many staff are confidently and competently delivering the phonics programme, a few staff have not had the training that they require. This hampers these staff's ability to support pupils who are learning to read. It also means that some pupils do not build up their phonics knowledge securely over time.

Leaders have ensured that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. Teachers are increasingly adept at identifying any pupils who have fallen behind with their reading knowledge. They are putting in place appropriate support to help these pupils to catch up. Nevertheless, while children in the early years and in key stage 1 now learn to read more accurately and fluently, some older pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. This means that some pupils do not read and write as well as they should.

In contrast, in other subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the important knowledge that pupils should learn. The curriculums in these subjects are well organised and well delivered. Typically, in these subjects, teachers check what pupils have learned and remembered. Teachers design lesson activities that build on what pupils already know and can do. Pupils achieve well.

Leaders identify any pupils with SEND quickly and efficiently. They work well with other professionals so that these pupils get the timely help that they need. Leaders are supporting teachers to adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that these pupils can access learning alongside their peers. Leaders make sure that these pupils are included in all aspects of school life.

Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers. They try hard to complete the work set. Children in the early years are keen to learn. In the main, teachers deal well with any occasional low-level disruption so that learning is not interrupted.

Pupils have a strong awareness of fundamental British values. For example, they are able to explain about the importance of democracy and the rule of law. Pupils learn to appreciate and respect faiths and cultures that are different from their own. They are

keen to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. For example, pupils raise funds to support a school in Kenya.

The governing body is highly supportive of pupils, leaders and staff. That said, until more recently, they have not paid sufficient attention to pupils' academic outcomes. This is particularly the case in reading, writing and mathematics. Over time, governors have not held leaders sufficiently to account for the school's performance.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They appreciate leaders' consideration for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Staff know the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They report and record concerns appropriately. Leaders follow up assiduously on any concerns.

Leaders work well with external partners to ensure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know how to report any worries and concerns. Pupils are aware of the risks when riding their bicycles and crossing the road. They know what to do to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils, particularly those in key stage 2, have gaps in their mathematics, writing and reading knowledge. These pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that teachers address any deficits in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding so that they achieve well by the end of key stage 2.
- Some adults have not had the training that they require to support pupils who are learning to read. This hinders how well some pupils learn to read. It also prevents other pupils from catching up with their phonics knowledge as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff are well trained to support pupils to learn to read.
- Over time, governors have not held leaders fully to account for the quality of the curriculum in reading and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. Some current pupils also underachieve in these areas. Governors should ensure that they hold leaders sufficiently to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2013.

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	119574
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256209
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Colin Pye
Headteacher	Sandra Livesey
Website	www.merebrow.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England primary school in the Diocese of Blackburn. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The governing body operates a breakfast club and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. As part of the deep dives, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at children's and pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

- An inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector spoke with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about whether they felt safe in school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's staff survey.
- An inspector spoke with parents and carers. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gary Bevin

Ofsted Inspector

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