

Inspection of Brook Community Primary School

Spelders Hill, Brook, Ashford, Kent TN25 5PB

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a buoyant and nurturing small school with big ambitions. Leaders' aspirations are warmly inclusive. Their high expectations are realised through strong, shared values. Children in the early years love celebrating when their peers are 'courageous'.

Lunchtime, playtime and breakfast club offer stimulating enjoyment for all. Pupils become happily immersed in games of chess, netball and football. Others love to read, draw, share construction equipment or balance on the trim trail. Older pupils model careful use of the mud kitchen for younger children. Pupils take care of equipment and tidy away beautifully. All pupils feel safe and happy. Relationships are reassuring and compassionate.

Leaders have made effective improvements with the new behaviour approach. Impressive pastoral care has led to great success for vulnerable pupils. Behaviour is positive, apart from when pupils are over-excited and talk when adults are speaking.

Pupils were thrilled to be part of a conservation project, playing a pivotal role in saving an endangered species of black moth. Pupils also appreciate regular storytelling workshops at a local country house. They learn about agriculture through 'hands-on' trips to a local farming museum. Church events and visits from the vicar are enriching. Staff offer a variety of clubs, including construction, language, choir and sports.

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

Outstanding leadership has led to rapid improvements in this delightful village school. Parents describe the headteacher as 'amazing', 'highly approachable' and 'dedicated'. They appreciate improvements in communication, and recommend the school highly. The assistant headteacher and the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) coordinator follow the headteacher's excellent example. Leaders make staff feel empowered, trusted and valued. Governors are equally passionate and knowledgeable. This exceptional leadership guarantees a sharp focus on what needs improving.

Reading is highly prioritised when children start in early years. All staff are trained to teach phonics with consistency. Pupils read well-matched books to embed their skills. Leaders use regular assessments to identify which sounds pupils are not remembering fully. Catch-up involves one-to-one and group support tailored to the unique needs of each pupil. Pupils adore reading. They develop fluency, comprehension and storytelling talent as they progress through the school.

Pupils with SEND benefit from using well-considered resources to aid their independence. For example, some pupils use angled workstations, wobble cushions or ear defenders to help them focus. Shaded books and overlays help pupils with dyslexia to achieve highly. Leaders are experts at identifying needs. They ensure

that the whole team shares responsibility for the well-being and success of pupils. Leaders also engage with external experts for targeted advice. As a result, pupils with SEND are thriving.

Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been strengthened and refined. Every subject is well planned with knowledge and skills. Leaders provide continual professional development to upskill staff. Teachers are highly supported through training and collaboration across the trust. Subject leadership is a real asset. In mathematics, pupils develop secure number skills which they use to solve investigations. They adeptly use pictures and modelling to help their working out. In history, pupils remember what they have learned. They make connections between periods of time and develop skills as historians to analyse sources.

Most lessons are well designed to ensure that pupils learn and remember ambitious knowledge. However, this is not entirely consistent. Sometimes, activities do not precisely match the planned learning, which renders assessment less effective. In older years, a 'retrieval' approach helps pupils to revise and connect prior learning, but this model is not fully established across the school.

Children in early years are flourishing. Staff use meaningful interactions to ensure that every activity has a learning benefit. Children plant seeds and grow plants, furthering their understanding of the world. They collaborate beautifully, often showing resilience and high levels of engagement. Support for children who speak English as an additional language is strong. A well-developed programme accelerates children's acquisition of vocabulary impressively.

Pupils are delightful to each other and adults. Happiness permeates the school. Sometimes, pupils do not manage their excitement enough. They occasionally chat when others are talking, so pupils may miss instructions from adults. However, leaders' actions to improve behaviour are already showing positive impact.

Attendance and punctuality rates are now better than national averages, as a result of impressive interventions by the headteacher.

Pupils say that 'everyone is welcome here'. They are passionate about equality and say that nobody should be judged by gender, faith, race or sexuality. Pupils challenge stereotypes and embrace diversity. Older pupils enjoy leadership roles such as team captain and 'green gang'. Pupils buzz with excitement about outdoor learning in the woodland area. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils access every opportunity available and never miss out. Pupils are thriving in this incredibly nurturing and inclusive school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Training is frequently refreshed. Every issue is taken seriously, and leaders work effectively to

get help for families when needed. Staff take care of vulnerable pupils with a package of support, delivered by staff who are trained to promote mental health and well-being.

Recruitment practice is secure. All staff and volunteers are checked with diligence. Leaders keep records meticulously.

Pupils are well prepared for modern life. They study online safety and learn about risks of particular apps. The well-designed curriculum teaches pupils about consent and healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Lessons are sometimes not designed precisely enough to ensure that pupils learn and remember the knowledge mapped out in curriculum plans. This means that some pupils may not achieve as well as they could in some subjects. Leaders must continue their work to ensure that lesson design and assessment practice are highly effective across all classes and subjects.
- High expectations about behaviour are not always met during lessons. While learning is not disrupted, some pupils talk when teachers are explaining important learning, which means other pupils may get distracted. Teachers should use the school's behaviour approach with greater consistency to ensure that all pupils listen and concentrate well in class.

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	118373
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268360
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Dominic Urand
Headteacher	Ellen Ranson-McCabe
Website	www.brook-ashford.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the CARE Foundation Trust, a group of 10 local schools.
- The new headteacher started in September 2022.
- The school offers a breakfast club on site, led by school staff.
- The school also offers wrap around care after school, led by an outside provider.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the SEND coordinator, teachers and support staff.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors studied documents and records, including the school's single central record and early help referrals. Inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding leader, staff, governors and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to pupils, and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read and observed catch-up interventions to evaluate how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- The lead inspector met five members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during social times and in lessons.

Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Hylands

Ofsted Inspector

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