

Inspection of a good school: Brookside Primary School

Rostherne Avenue, Great Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 2EE

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Outcome

Brookside Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy coming to school. Teachers greet pupils warmly each morning. Pupils settle down to work quickly and sensibly. They said that they feel happy and safe in school because staff are kind to them and will look after them well.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Mostly, pupils rise to these expectations and achieve highly.

In the main, pupils behave admirably and they are polite and respectful to each other and adults. They move around the school sensibly. On the rare occasions when pupils make incorrect behaviour choices, staff use the behaviour policy appropriately.

Pupils said that they can talk to adults in school if they have any concerns. When bullying happens, pupils said that adults will sort it out. Leaders have robust systems in place to deal with any instances of bullying quickly and effectively.

Pupils enjoy the friendly and accepting atmosphere at school. They are adamant that everyone is welcome here. Pupils particularly enjoy the broad range of trips on offer. This includes residential visits, which help to develop their team building skills.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is a well-designed curriculum in place for pupils, including for children in the early years. Leaders have made sure that staff are clear about what pupils should be learning and when this content should be taught. This helps staff to design learning well, to present new ideas with clarity and, in most subjects, pupils acquire a rich body of knowledge.

In the main, teachers use assessment strategies skilfully. During lessons, staff check regularly on pupils' understanding of concepts and give immediate support to ensure they

quickly address any misconceptions. This helps pupils to progress well through the curriculum. Nevertheless, in a small number of subjects, leaders have introduced revised curriculums more recently. As a result, some pupils have gaps in aspects of their prior knowledge. This hinders these pupils in building securely on earlier learning and making links with new content.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of early reading. From the early years, staff surround children with high-quality texts. In key stage 1, and in the early years, staff skilfully design learning around interesting books and this helps to bring topics to life. Staff are quick to celebrate younger pupils' reading successes and this motivates pupils to read more often. However, some older pupils do not benefit from access to a suitable range of high-quality texts.

Leaders have ensured that staff are trained well to deliver their chosen phonics scheme successfully. Staff's consistent approach to the teaching of phonics helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2. Children in the early years enjoy using their phonics knowledge to decode new words and write their own labels. Staff choose reading books for pupils which closely match their phonics ability. Leaders have ensured that, when pupils fall behind in reading, there are robust measures in place to help them to catch up. Leaders check that extra support from staff for these pupils has the desired effect and make appropriate adjustments when necessary.

Leaders have suitable systems in place to identify pupils' additional needs swiftly and accurately. They share useful information about the needs of pupils with SEND with staff. Teachers are clear about what to put in place and how to deliver the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well. Leaders utilise a range of other agencies to help pupils with both their learning and emotional needs.

There is occasional low-level disruption in some classes. A small minority of pupils sometimes struggle to maintain their focus during lessons. However, teachers notice this quickly and remind pupils what is expected of them in terms of their conduct. This means that the learning of other pupils is rarely disrupted.

Leaders have developed a broad extra-curricular offer for pupils across school. There are trips which support learning in many areas of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the trips that help to cement their learning, such as visiting the museum to make their own volcanoes.

Leaders promote many aspects of pupils' wider personal development well. Pupils learn about inclusion and respect. For example, pupils talk about how they support each other in their learning. Pupils understand the importance of staying healthy and keeping safe. They learn about different families and faiths and are clear that they celebrate similarities and differences between people.

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school. Staff enjoy working here and said that they feel well supported and appreciated. They know that leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff complete appropriate training regularly. Staff understand what to look out for that may indicate a pupil is at risk of physical or emotional harm. Staff remain vigilant. They record and report safeguarding concerns carefully and promptly.

Leaders follow up on all safeguarding concerns appropriately. For example, they work with external agencies effectively to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about the possible risks that they may face in the community and when they are online. They learn about the actions that they can take to help to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have only introduced curriculums more recently. This means that some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, staff are equipped well to identify and address the gaps in pupils' learning, so that pupils have a secure foundation of knowledge for subsequent learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that some older pupils are exposed to a broad enough range of high-quality texts that they can read and listen to for pleasure. This means that some older pupils do not read widely enough. Leaders should ensure that pupils can access texts from a wide range of genres and authors to better support the cultivation of a love of reading across the school.

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 October 2014.

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	131956
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10291426
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Donovan
Headteacher	Daniel Orme
Website	www.brookside.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change in leadership since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 carried out deep dives into early reading, mathematics and physical education. She spoke with staff who lead these subjects, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. The inspector also spoke with pupils about their learning and reviewed examples of their work.
- The inspector also met with staff who lead other curriculum subjects.
- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a wide range of other staff.

- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents relating to safeguarding. She examined leaders' approach to safer recruitment. The inspector also spoke to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and checked how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers to gather their views about the school. She considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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