

Inspection of a good school: Brickhill Primary School

Dove Road, Brickhill, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 7AA

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

Brickhill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of school life. They are proud to attend here. Adults are caring and supportive and invest time in getting to know pupils individually. In return, pupils are respectful to staff. Pupils enjoy the range of topics they learn about and are motivated to earn 'Achieve 100' class points and merit certificates.

Pupils are courteous and thoughtful. They show empathy towards each other. Learning is not interrupted. Playtimes are relaxed and enjoyable. Pupils understand the high standards of behaviour set by staff. They take pride in living up to these expectations. Older pupils act as role models in assemblies and are peer mediators. Pupils are treated fairly. They like the way they are taught to respect each other's heritage. Pupils say that if they have any worries, staff are quick to help them.

Pupils develop their interests in sport, music and art through a range of clubs and experiences. They can play in a rock band, learn an instrument, exhibit artwork in the community, meet an artist and take part in sporting events, such as basketball and football. Every year group has a trip linked to a curriculum area. Older pupils look forward to their residential visit.

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

The school has carefully developed an ambitious curriculum. Staff have the time to become familiar with new curriculum content. Subject leaders are knowledgeable. Staff follow advice from leaders on how to teach their subjects. Pupils are provided with good-quality learning materials and are exposed to rich vocabulary. Teachers provide clear instructions. They offer praise and encouragement to all pupils. This has had a positive impact, for example on pupils' achievement in writing and in phonics.

The school is refining some areas of the curriculum. This is because leaders are aware that, in some subjects, the specific knowledge pupils need to know, when and in what

detail is not explicit enough. This hinders pupils learning some subjects in the depth leaders want them to, including in early years.

Staff regularly check if pupils can recall what they have learned in a specific lesson. They address misconceptions. Pupils can remember what they have learned about a topic and can relate to previous learning or a curriculum visit. However, the school is not checking thoroughly that pupils are recalling precise subject knowledge in the detail intended. Equally, the school does not always use checks on learning to inform next steps in future lessons for pupils. This means, for some pupils, that gaps in knowledge are not filled quickly enough. It also means that some pupils, including in the early years, receive work that they can complete with relative ease. This limits how well some pupils can achieve what they are fully capable of.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have adult support in class so that they can successfully access the curriculum. There are effective systems in place to ensure that advice from external professionals is acted on. This has had a positive impact on many pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND have specific learning targets which are regularly reviewed. The school has identified the need for these targets to be in smaller, manageable chunks so that pupils with SEND can secure key knowledge more quickly. Leaders have this in hand.

The school ensures pupils read well. From the start of school, pupils learn the letter sounds they need to know in a clear and logical order. Reading is frequently practised across the whole school and books are appropriately matched to reading ability. As a result, pupils read confidently and fluently. The few who need extra help with reading are catching up. Pupils enjoy reading, access well-resourced libraries and can discuss favourite authors.

Staff ensure pupils understand how to behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. The school's work on accepting difference and through teaching its 'Thrive' values, such as respect and tolerance, results in few instances of unkind behaviour. Pupils know what bullying is and know about tackling discrimination. They have an age-appropriate understanding of equal rights. This ensures a harmonious school environment.

The school has put in place effective practices to ensure pupils attend school regularly and are safe. Pupils have timely support if they need help to manage their emotions. They understand healthy lifestyles and relationships. They know how to stay safe online and how to manage risks.

Governors provide effective strategic oversight, including of safeguarding. They check that leaders' actions have a positive impact on pupils' achievement, attendance and well-being.

Staff value the focus leaders have on their well-being. They know and appreciate how leaders are mindful of their workload when making curriculum decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the precise knowledge that pupils need to know is not signposted clearly enough. This means pupils are not always taught the specific subject knowledge leaders intend or in enough depth. Leaders need to ensure that all staff, from early years upwards, are clear on what specific subject knowledge must be taught, in what detail and when.
- Currently, staff are not adapting lessons sufficiently well to meet the precise needs of pupils in their class. This means that some pupils, including in early years, are not having gaps in knowledge filled quickly enough, or can complete work they are already capable of. Staff need additional support on how to use checks on learning to better inform next steps for pupils. The school needs to ensure that work set is better matched to needs so that pupils secure and extend their knowledge.

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 November 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109503
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10294917
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Lorna Godden (Interim)
Headteacher	Debbie Wilson
Website	www.brickhillprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has become a one-form entry primary school since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club on site, run by the school.
- The substantive chair of governors is currently on maternity leave.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other senior staff, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, art and design and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also looked at a range of pupils' work from across the curriculum.
- The inspector held a meeting with the school improvement partner employed by the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to the chair of the governing board. The inspector also met three other members of the governing board.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, governors' minutes and monitoring reports and the local authority's annual safeguarding audit.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of the local authority, leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, which included 45 free-text comments. There were 24 responses to the staff survey. No pupils answered the pupil survey. The inspector spoke to several pupils from different year groups during the inspection, as well as a range of staff.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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