

Inspection of a good school: Briscoe Lane Academy

Briscoe Lane, Newton Heath, Manchester M40 2TB

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 February 2024

Outcome

Briscoe Lane Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Claire Hall. This school is part of Wise Owl Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sophie Murfin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Battle.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. They become keen readers who access a rich range of books from across different cultures and by different authors. This helps pupils to 'see' themselves in the books that they read. Older pupils are prepared well for the challenges of key stage 3.

Pupils are confident and articulate. They spoke with great maturity about what matters to them, such as fairness. Pupils show high levels of respect towards others who may be different to themselves. Pupils explained to inspectors how everyone is welcome at their school. They enjoy supporting and taking care of each other. Pupils' positive conduct helps to create a purposeful atmosphere throughout the school.

The school has high expectations of all pupils. It is focused on raising pupils' aspirations. The school expects pupils, irrespective of their starting points, to succeed. Pupils value their education. They work hard and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Pupils achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), whose academic and personal needs are carefully considered.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of experiences to develop their character and resilience. They develop strong relationships with staff. Pupils know that the adults in school look after them well to keep them emotionally healthy and physically safe.

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

The school has developed strong staff expertise across many aspects of its work, including subject leadership. It has benefited considerably from the support of the trust.

Leaders at all levels focus on ensuring that pupils receive a high-quality education. The school makes sure that staff workload is not increased when it makes improvements. Staff appreciate the support that they receive to fulfil their roles successfully. They are overwhelmingly proud and happy to work at the school.

The curriculum is skilfully designed to build pupils' knowledge in a logical way from the early years to Year 6. Children in the early years are set up well for the move into Year 1, while older pupils move seamlessly on to their next classes.

The school has revised and strengthened its subject curriculums in a well-thought-out way. Consequently, some subject curriculums are more established than others. Teachers have the expertise to deliver these subject curriculums well. They select appropriate activities to deepen pupils' knowledge successfully. Teachers make learning memorable for pupils. They provide opportunities for pupils to revisit earlier learning and to 'interrupt forgetting'. Pupils build new learning on firm foundations.

Improvements to a small number of subject curriculums are more recent. Teachers' subject knowledge has not been strengthened to the same extent. Consequently, the curriculum is not delivered as consistently well in these subjects as it is in others. Added to this, some teachers are not as adept at checking that pupils' understanding is secure before moving on to new learning. This means that some pupils do not have an even body of subject knowledge across the curriculum.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND swiftly and accurately. It makes sure that staff understand the additional needs of these pupils well. Staff support pupils' learning effectively. This ensures that pupils with SEND progress through the curriculum well.

Reading is a top priority for the school. Children revel in the stories, rhymes and songs that they learn in the Nursery classes. This prepares them well for learning how to read words in the Reception Year. Pupils learn to appreciate different types of books, including poetry and non-fiction. They enjoy reading a wide range of well-loved and contemporary authors.

Skilled staff support pupils to learn to read using the school's well-established phonics programme. This includes pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language when they join the school. Most pupils can read with accuracy and fluency by the end of key stage 1. Any pupils who struggle to keep up with the reading programme receive the support that they need to catch up quickly.

Pupils work and play together harmoniously. They are polite and considerate towards staff and each other. These qualities provide a secure basis for pupils' future success.

Attendance remains a high priority. The school is assiduous in its approach to securing pupils' regular attendance. It has taken effective action to reduce the number of pupils who are absent from school too often. These pupils' rates of attendance are improving as a result.

The school provides exceptional support for pupils' wider development. Pupils learn to become active and responsible citizens. For example, they learn to recognise examples of inequality or injustice. Pupils learn how to keep safe when they are online and beyond the school gates. By the time that pupils reach Year 6, they have the self-assurance and skills to be ready for their next stage of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's work to refine a small number of subject curriculums is relatively recent. This means that some pupils have not built their learning in these subjects as securely as in others. The school should ensure that staff are provided with the support that they need to deliver their revised class curriculums effectively. This is so that pupils build a secure body of knowledge across the curriculum.
- The school's approaches to checking on what pupils know and remember are less well developed in a small number of subjects. This makes it more difficult for teachers to identify where pupils have potential gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that, in these few remaining subjects, teachers are suitably equipped to check what pupils know and can do before introducing new learning.

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 September 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	138653
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10294368
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	643
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Battle
CEO	Sophie Murfin
Principal	Claire Hall
Website	www.briscoe.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Wise Owl Trust.
- A large proportion of pupils at this school have lived in other countries before they began at the school. Many pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the CEO, the principal and other leaders in the school. An inspector also spoke with trustees, including the chair of trustees, and members of the local school committee.

- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art and design and religious education. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. An inspector scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they brought their children to school. Inspectors considered the free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. There were insufficient online responses to generate any data.
- Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ros Munro

Ofsted Inspector

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