

# Inspection of a good school: Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Primary School

Market Heath, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 7NY

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 July 2024

## Outcome

Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher is Jane Mallon. This school is part of the Tenax School Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Richard Tyson, and overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Simon Curtis.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embody the school's values. They consistently demonstrate humility, compassion, grace, forgiveness and integrity. For pupils, these are more than words. They are how they behave. They demonstrate strong character and a clear sense of right and wrong. Their mutual understanding of how to treat each other means they feel safe and happy at school. They rush to come through the gates in the morning and tell visitors about their pride in the school and each other.

Learning is important for all pupils. They revel in the school's language-rich approach. Their subject-specific vocabulary is a source of pride, and they speak with authority and passion about their learning. Pupils have a firm grasp of complex technical vocabulary the school intends them to learn, such as 'equatorial', 'delta' and 'topography'. They relish using this vocabulary and feel empowered and confident because of their knowledge.

Pupils treat each other with kindness. The school has a truly inclusive atmosphere with high learning and behaviour expectations. Pupils play collaboratively across year groups. The school has a close community feeling, and pupils benefit from warm relationships with all the adults in the school. One parent told inspectors, 'Both my children enjoy school greatly despite having very different gifts, needs and personalities.'

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

The curriculum is ambitious. The school has constructed a broad and balanced curriculum that contains the precise knowledge that pupils learn. This starts in Reception and

effectively builds pupils' language and understanding. The school has focused on carefully sequencing learning over time. For example, in geography, children in Reception produce simple maps of the Reception outdoor area. In key stage 1, this progresses into an understanding of basic digital imagery and maps. Pupils in key stage 2 begin to manipulate and use digital mapping and imagery with more detail.

Staff identify pupils with potential special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Pupils with SEND are given explicit support that is carefully planned into the curriculum. Generally, the very low numbers of pupils with SEND and any other disadvantage achieve well. However, sometimes the support is less effective, and the books of pupils with SEND can reflect this.

Pupils across the school are enthusiastic about learning and are proud of their achievements. Pupils achieve in line with the national average at key stages 1 and 2. The majority of teaching closely follows the planned curriculum. In these lessons, staff use expert knowledge to provide clear explanations and design tasks that support pupils to learn the key content. Teaching is occasionally less precise, and some misconceptions are not addressed sufficiently well. This slows pupils' learning, and they are not supported to build on prior learning as well as they could.

The teaching of phonics is exceptionally successful. Pupils achieve results in the phonics screening check, which are significantly above the national published average. In 2023, all pupils met the expected standard. Pupils' positive achievement results from staff expertly following a detailed and carefully sequenced programme. Teaching phonics in Reception starts with tenacity and urgency. Teachers follow the school's chosen programme consistently, and they meticulously check what pupils know. Pupils who fall behind are supported with effective additional help. Consequently, the achievement of all pupils is strong.

Pupils behave with respect and kindness. Staff explicitly model positive interactions with children in Reception. Their approach builds a culture of positive behaviour from the start of school. Pupils with SEND are carefully nurtured, and reasonable adjustments are made to ensure consistent inclusivity. Pupils are well-informed about issues such as bullying. They feel safe and trust adults to resolve any potential worries. The school is taking reasonable action to improve attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance is in line with the national average.

Pupils are active modern citizens. Pupils who are 'Junior Chaplins' encourage others to actively improve their community. The school is ambitious for pupils to have an accepting and tolerant worldview. This ambition is reflected in the citizenship curriculum. Pupil-led campaigns such as the recent earthquake relief fundraising and the gathering of resources for partner schools in Tanzania demonstrate their broad worldview. The school has ensured that all pupils benefit from a comprehensive extra-curricular offer. Consequently, pupils are mature and ready for the next stages of education and the world beyond.

Leaders are dedicated and passionate about the school's development. Leaders pay close attention to the workload and welfare of staff. Staff receive an exceptionally strong

professional development offer. Governors and trust leaders understand and meet their statutory duties. They provide challenge and support and have an extremely positive influence on the school's development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is not yet taught in all subjects consistently and effectively. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they might. The school must support staff to ensure the planned curriculum is followed closely and that staff have the expert knowledge they need to build on pupils' prior knowledge. The school should help staff to check pupils' understanding and use this to inform their future teaching.

## **Background**

When we have judged 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 predecessor school, Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good in November 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' 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142689
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322014
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Simon Curtis
<b>Interim chief executive officer</b>	Richard Tyson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Mallon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bmprimary.org.uk">www.bmprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Tenax Schools Trust in May 2016.
- This is a Church of England school and is in the Diocese of Rochester. Its last section 48 inspection education was in February 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## 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 met with the headteacher, chief executive officer and other members of the leadership team.

- The inspector also met with members of the local governing body and trustees from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. The inspector also spoke to pupils in lessons and during play and lunchtime.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, the school improvement plan and minutes of governor and trustee meetings.
- The inspector gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspector 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.
- The inspector spoke to parents and considered their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. The views of pupils were also considered through Ofsted's survey.

### **Inspection team**

Toby Martlew

His Majesty's Inspector

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