

Brunswick House Primary School

Leafy Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0QQ

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The determination of the headteacher and her senior team has ensured that clear, well-focused plans are in place to drive the school forward. These are reviewed systematically and regularly. As a result, the achievement of pupils across the curriculum continues to rise.
- The curriculum is rich, broad and exciting. Learning is made meaningful to pupils through clear links to the school's values and the wider world.
- Governors are effective in their leadership roles. They check things meticulously to ensure that they provide leaders with both support and challenge.
- Safeguarding systems are robust. Processes to keep pupils safe are widely understood. Staff have had all the necessary training to help them to keep pupils safe.
- Teachers plan lessons which pupils enjoy. Lessons are mostly well matched to pupils' needs and support pupils in making good progress from their starting points. In some aspects of writing, such as spelling, expectations are not always high enough.
- Teachers use questioning highly effectively to extend pupils' thinking and to assess their depth of understanding.
- Pupils play an active and important role in all layers of school life. They participate fully in lessons and in school development. There are myriads of opportunities for pupils to be involved. As a result, pupils are confident, articulate and well prepared both for the next steps in their education and life beyond.
- In the 2017 national assessments, at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 more pupils attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than proportions of pupils nationally. However, leaders recognise that disadvantaged pupils did not attain as well as their peers or other pupils nationally in key stage 2.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. The combination of a stimulating learning environment and highly skilled staff ensures that children make good progress from their starting points across the curriculum. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that disadvantaged pupils make consistently strong progress in key stage 2 from their starting points so that they attain well across the curriculum.
- Raise writing standards throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of writing across the wider curriculum are consistently as high as they are in English
 - raising the standard of spelling across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is passionately committed to ensuring that the pupils of Brunswick House enjoy an education which prepares them well for the next stages of their education both as learners and citizens. Together with her senior leaders, she links all aspects of school development to the school values of respect, honesty, empathy, self-belief and teamwork. As a result, the school is a harmonious and unified community in which everyone works together with common goals.
- The senior leadership team works in an effective partnership with the local authority and the governing body. Together they have ensured that plans for school improvement are detailed and regularly evaluated using a wide range of information. This approach has ensured that areas for development, such as the focus on developing mathematical reasoning, are effective in continuing to raise standards and drive the school forward.
- Subject leaders too have developed detailed action plans. They are ensuring that initiatives such as the mathematical development drive have impact across the wider curriculum. For example, the focus on reasoning has now been extended into science and linked to technical and scientific vocabulary development. As a result, the whole curriculum is further strengthened.
- Subject leaders check on the progress pupils are making in their subjects through looking at the work pupils are doing. In English and mathematics progress information is well used to identify which aspects of the subjects are strongest and which groups of pupils need additional focus. In other curriculum areas this depth of review is developing alongside the new assessment systems.
- Regular meetings to share and assess work both in school and with the local group of schools have helped to ensure that assessments are accurate. Several school leaders take lead roles within this local work. This contributes to an effective system of professional development within school. All staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire felt that the school was well led and that their professional development was encouraged.
- The curriculum is wide-ranging and well planned to ensure that pupils have the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need across subjects. It is supplemented by a wide range of clubs and enrichment opportunities. For example, the link with the school in Chipoka allows pupils to develop a depth of understanding about life in Malawi.
- A rich seam of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education runs through the school. Pupils learn about themselves, each other and the wider world in assemblies and well-planned curriculum activities. They use this learning to develop respect for others and an ability to reflect on school and wider societal systems. In this way, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and becoming acquainted with the wider world.
- Home learning is used effectively to build on academic learning and reinforce school values. For example, in a year-group assembly pupils were encouraged to share a wide

range of home learning, from flag design to posters showing the importance of hand washing. Mathematics problems completed with parents were linked effectively to the school value of teamwork. In this way, learning at home is developed well.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective partners in school leadership. Minutes of meetings and monitoring reports show that they are strategic, well informed and objective. Their view that they have 'made great strides' is shared by school leaders and local authority reviews. As a result, they hold leaders to account effectively. They use a range of information to guide them in asking insightful questions about the progress and attainment of pupils across the school. Governors follow up on the answers to these questions with school visits to see things for themselves. They speak to pupils to gain their views, and they take account of parent questionnaires.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. They are not complacent, however, and acknowledge there is more work to be done in key areas, such as raising the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and ensuring that they make consistently good progress in all areas of the curriculum across the school. Governors scrutinise plans for these improvements carefully to ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant, is being well used to support this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have completed all necessary training and are aware of the systems to identify and record concerns. These concerns are documented appropriately and in a timely fashion. In the event that additional support is needed from other agencies, these referrals are tracked meticulously and followed up tenaciously by school leaders. In this way, pupils are kept safe and families get the support that they need from time to time.
- Pupils who completed the pupil questionnaire or spoke to inspectors told them that they felt safe at school. Because pupils know that their opinions are valued and listened to, they are confident that adults would support them in resolving any bullying or difficulties they might have. However, because of the culture of respect and the development of empathy across the school, such difficulties are rare. Pupils often have the skills to resolve problems themselves or use the buddy system to help with minor fallouts. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including online. They are rightly proud of their efforts to secure a zebra crossing outside the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They have benefited from effective professional development in key areas of school development, such as increasing mathematical reasoning. As a result, they plan lessons and sequences of learning which build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding successfully. This supports good progress and attainment.

- Teachers plan lessons which excite and interest pupils. Pupils told inspectors, 'We are always doing something exciting.' Pupils' books and displays around the school reflect this. For example, there is a range of high-quality artwork on display and a wide variety of experiments and investigations in science books.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are developed well. A focus on explaining mathematical ideas, along with strong computational skills, has ensured that pupils across the school are confident and competent mathematicians. For example, in an effective key stage 2 mathematics lesson in which pupils were asked to demonstrate why calculations using fractions were either correct or incorrect, a pupil explained, 'If you add them the denominator stays the same.'
- Teachers use questions highly effectively to probe and extend pupils' thinking. In this way, they are able to identify any confusions and adapt their lesson accordingly. They also use questions well to stretch and challenge the most able pupils.
- Skilled teaching assistants support groups of pupils and individuals effectively, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN). Teaching assistants also use questioning highly effectively to develop understanding and assess progress. This support increases pupils' confidence and participation levels are high.
- Pupils read fluently and widely. Their answers to comprehension-type questions show an understanding of the motivations of characters and plot. As a result, most pupils demonstrate at least age-appropriate reading skills.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of writing opportunities across the curriculum. This supports them in writing effectively for a range of purposes and in a variety of ways. Pupils use rich descriptive vocabulary and mostly demonstrate age-appropriate grammatical skills. Both correct spelling of basic vocabulary and the application of spelling patterns are not consistent across the school. Sometimes expectations of writing conventions are not as equally high in other curriculum areas as they are in English books.
- Phonics teaching is effective. Pupils have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters and groups of letters can make. They apply this well to their early reading and writing. However, as pupils move up through the school their spelling choices are not consistently well developed, and expectations are too variable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils relish their role as partners in their learning. They appreciate the many opportunities available to them to partake in the wider life of the school as sports ambassadors, rights-respecting school leaders, buddies, school council representatives, eco council and many more. Pupils understand that these responsibilities are good preparation for the next stages of their education and beyond. One pupil encapsulated the views of many of the pupils who spoke to inspectors, saying, 'It's not just basic learning. Each child has a chance to make your voice heard. It's very open. It gives you a taste of the outside world; you are shown a little bit at a time what you can be.'

- The well-attended breakfast club ensures that pupils start their day with a healthy breakfast and time to socialise and learn together. Activities are well planned to interest and support pupils. For example, there is a writing focus group. The focus on health and well-being extends through home learning projects on healthy lunchboxes to the wide range of sports available through after-school clubs.
- Most parents who spoke to inspectors or completed the Ofsted questionnaire Parent View felt that their children were happy and well cared for at school. A view which was typical of those received was from the parent who told inspectors, 'My child cannot wait to go to school each day due to the amazing atmosphere they create.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During the inspection, pupils responded well to the unusual weather conditions created by a considerable amount of snow. On the playground they tempered their excitement with an awareness of the need to be safe and keep others safe. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly fashion, demonstrating respect and consideration for each other and adults. They open doors and greet adults with a cheery 'good morning'.
- In classes pupils work well together. They listen to each other and build on each other's suggestions. Pupils are excited by learning. For example, children in the early years were fascinated by the teacher using signing during snack-time to show 'orange', asking her, 'How do you say orange juice?' In another class a pupil used a dictionary to check the term 'coherent' before explaining the meaning to his classmates.
- Attendance levels are generally good. Attendance is monitored carefully and regularly. The family liaison officer works effectively with pupils and their families to support improved attendance when it is needed. Despite this, the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is not consistently good enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the 2017 national assessment tests at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, the proportions of pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics exceeded proportions seen nationally. Work in pupils' books and school information show that the proportions of current pupils who are working at age-related expectations across the school are similarly high.
- The proportions of pupils attaining at higher standards were above proportions seen nationally at the end key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of key stage 2, the proportions of pupils attaining the higher standards were above those seen nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Books of current pupils show that their attainment at higher levels in mathematics has further increased as a result of the effective development of mathematical reasoning across the school. Pupils of all ages are able to explain their mathematical thinking clearly and apply this to solving a range of problems, including those requiring multiple steps.

- More pupils achieved the required standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening in 2017 than proportions of pupils seen nationally. Phonics is taught well, ensuring that pupils make good progress from their starting points in their understanding of letters and the sounds that they make.
- The broad curriculum provides a range of opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in English and mathematics. However, sometimes the expectations of English are not as high in other subjects as in specific English lessons. Pupils' books show that they are developing the subject-related skills, knowledge and understanding that they need across the curriculum. This is particularly the case in science, where hypothesis and scientific vocabulary are developed well.
- Most pupils who have SEN make good progress from their starting points. Their needs are understood well and provision is planned carefully to ensure that these needs are met. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils who receive the additional pupil premium funding is good in key stage 1, but remains variable across key stage 2, particularly in writing. This is despite careful allocation of this funding and regular reviews of progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The Reception Year provides a well-structured and exciting environment both inside and out to support children in their learning and play. During the inspection children were responding to the recent snowfall with glee. They wanted to make a snowman and were working well as a team to collect wheelbarrows full of snow to do so. Other children happily made snow spaghetti bolognaise to feed him. In this way, learning opportunities are developed effectively from the children's interests.
- Children are further supported by consistent routines, for example for snack-time and tidy-up time. These routines provide children with opportunities to further develop their social skills. They are well supported in this by adults. For example, an adult helping children to pack away building blocks asked the children, 'Who wants to help me find the cuboids?'
- The early years leader ensures that all required systems are in place for safeguarding and that policies and procedures are implemented consistently. She ensures that all necessary information is shared appropriately so that children get the support that they need.
- Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning and development at home. The results of this support are displayed and celebrated in the classrooms. Stay and play sessions further develop the home-school partnership effectively.
- Learning journals document children's progress in a wide range of learning areas using observations. These are used well to generate next-steps targets for children. These targets help to ensure that children make good progress across the curriculum from their starting points. As a result, children are prepared well for Year 1.
- In 2017, more children attained a good level of development from their starting points than proportions of children nationally. Disadvantaged children did not attain as well as their peers or other children nationally. Current children are making good progress from their starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	118297
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10040921

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bateson-Cooper/ Laurel Townend
Headteacher	Wendy Skinner
Telephone number	01622 752102
Website	www.brunswick-house.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@brunswick-house.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 February 2016

Information about this school

- Brunswick House is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN is below the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with staff, parents and leaders. The lead inspector met with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including development plans, minutes of meetings and progress information.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school and in their classes. In the classes they observed teaching, looked at books, heard pupils read and spoke to them about their work.
- Inspectors met with pupils to get their views of the school and considered 58 pupil survey responses. They took account of parents' views at the school gate and considered 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 110 free-text responses. The lead inspector returned a telephone call to a parent.
- Inspectors also considered the school's own parental survey information and 28 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hogarth	Ofsted Inspector
James Freeston	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Hughes	Her Majesty's Inspector

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