

Inspection of Brookland Church of England Primary School

Brookland, High Street, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9QR

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Brookland describe it as 'an amazing school'. They thrive in the small school environment where adults know their pupils incredibly well. Pupils feel safe and support one another to develop positive and supportive relationships. Pupils are confident and keen to talk to visitors to describe what makes their school special. They are proud to rise to the high expectations and ambitions that staff have for them. All pupils know about the importance of being 'ready, respectful, safe'. They have a secure understanding of the schools' 'CHOICES' values of courage, humility, offering, integrity, commitment, empathy and service. They can talk about not only what these mean, but why they are important to help form a strong and supportive school community.

The pupils live the values of the school. Bullying in school is very rare. Pupils are confident that if it did happen, staff would deal with it immediately. Behaviour around the school site is exemplary. Pupils are calm and settled, and there are clearly well-established routines in place. Pupils wait calmly to take turns, for example, in playground games. Pupils often take on leadership roles, for example groups devise and run games on the playground.

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

Leaders have planned an increasingly well-considered curriculum which is carefully sequenced. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn and remember more over time. This begins right from the early years, where there are strong foundations laid to support learning in Year 1 and beyond. While national test scores last year were disappointing, leaders have already taken steps to develop provision and current pupils are making good progress through the planned curriculum. In reading and mathematics, teachers have well-established systems to assess what pupils know and can remember. This means that teachers can then adapt what they teach to inform next steps. In some foundation subjects, this is not yet as fully developed. While teachers check learning regularly during lessons, leaders have not embedded a system to check what pupils can remember over time.

Early reading is taught consistently well. Children benefit from targeted and specific sessions to support them with their identified needs. This helps them to develop quickly to become fluent and confident readers. The school forges strong links with the local nursery, which ensures that leaders can know, identify and meet the needs of children from the very beginning. This is particularly effective for pupils with SEND.

In lessons there is a very positive learning culture. Pupils are keen to engage with their learning. They can explain what they have understood and they ask thoughtful questions, considering their new learning against what they already know. Classrooms are calm, orderly places. Pupils know the school rules and understand

how these keep them and their friends safe and happy. However, too many pupils currently do not attend school frequently enough, which hinders their learning.

The personal development of pupils in this school is exemplary. This is strongly rooted in the values of the school, which pupils embody in their actions and their discussion. They know what it is to be accepting of others, and why it is important in a healthy community. In assemblies, for example, pupils engage thoughtfully with discussions around 'offering' and what it means to help others. Even the youngest children in the school can talk about why showing care and support for others is essential to make their school a happy, kind place.

There is a wide range of trips and visits planned for pupils to experience and learn about the world beyond their immediate community. These include theatre trips and residential visits. All pupils benefit from weekly sessions in the 'Woodland@Brookland' provision in school. These develop pupils' leadership skills alongside their abilities to work in a team and be resourceful. This high-quality work not only supports pupils' wider development but also carefully reinforces the learning from their subjects. For example, den building activities in the woodland area were used to reinforce learning about Mayan temples from history.

Leaders know their school well and carefully identify the actions they need to take to develop it. They work effectively with governors and school improvement partners from the local authority to evaluate the impact of their actions. This helps them to know that their actions are having the impact they want them to. Work on the curriculum over the last few years has resulted in improved opportunities for pupils to learn and develop.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to identify early any signs that pupils may need help or support. They make swift referrals where they have concerns, and leaders act quickly to secure the support that children and their families need. They work well with external agencies and are unafraid to hold them to account where this support is needed. Leaders complete appropriate checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with children. Governors know their responsibilities in regard to safeguarding and hold leaders to account.

Through the curriculum, pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, particularly online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The levels of persistent absence in the school are too high. As a result, some pupils miss too much of their education. Leaders need to take actions to reduce this figure to make sure that all pupils attend well and can benefit from the education the school provides.
- Summative assessment is not yet well embedded in some foundation subjects. As a result, staff do not know how much knowledge pupils have remembered over time. Leaders need to ensure that the foundation subjects have the same systematic approach to assessment as is evident in the core subjects.

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	118664
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256403
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ms Tara Pollard
Headteacher	Martin Hacker
Website	www.brookland.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Brookland is a smaller-than-average primary school, which teaches classes in combined year groups.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Canterbury. The last inspection of its religious character was in October 2015.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the local governing body,

including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to adults who the pupils knew.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held meetings with safeguarding leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the single central record and checked safeguarding records.
- The inspection team also took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and minutes of governors' meetings. They also considered external reports of the school from the local authority, as well as stakeholder engagement surveys undertaken by the school.
- The team spoke with pupils about their experiences of the school. They took account of parent and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Therese Winthe

Ofsted Inspector

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