

Inspection of a good school: Brook House Junior School

School Road, Beighton, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S20 1EG

Inspection dates:

13–14 November 2019

Outcome

Brook House Junior School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy. They trust staff to deal with any poor behaviour and feel comfortable talking to staff if they have any worries or concerns. Staff are very dedicated. They care deeply about pupils.

Many pupils enjoy after-school activities. During the inspection, the girls in the football team turned up to play, despite the wet weather. Pupils also enjoy school trips, which help them to make sense of their learning.

Pupils love reading. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their favourite books and to use the school library. Pupils are keen to borrow books to read at home. However, pupils who struggle with reading are not always supported as well as they could be. Pupils also enjoy mathematics. However, some teachers do not always get the best out of pupils in this subject.

Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to do their best. At lunchtimes, while some pupils are a little rough when they play outside they soon calm down when adults speak to them. Pupils say that they sometimes hear bad language but that adults deal with it quickly.

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

In science, curriculum plans are strong but still very new. Schemes of work are designed to build up pupils' scientific knowledge from one year to the next. For example, pupils in Year 5 revisited what they had done in Year 3 about light. This refreshed their memory and so they were able to build up their knowledge well. Leaders know that pupils need to be able to use their scientific knowledge to help them understand practical problems and investigations.

Those pupils who are confident readers achieve well by the time they reach Year 6. The school has a strong culture of encouraging reading for pleasure. Many pupils make good use of the library. By the time they leave school, most pupils achieve well. However, those who struggle with reading when they arrive in Year 3 do not achieve as well as they could. This is because pupils continue to have gaps in their phonic knowledge. Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to thoroughly learn and practise their reading skills. Teaching assistants are not sufficiently trained to support pupils effectively. In mathematics, teaching differs from class to class. This is because some teachers have had more recent training to support them better in the classroom.

The curriculum in reading, mathematics and music is still developing. It is not yet possible to see how pupils build up their knowledge in these subjects. This is leading to inconsistency across different years.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well looked after but their achievement varies. Those who arrive in Year 3 with weak reading skills do not achieve well.

The governing body has a sound understanding of what is good and what needs further improvement. Rightly, governors have been concerned about pupils' achievement in different subjects, which has varied. They ask searching questions in meetings to both challenge and support school leaders. However, governors have not ensured that the school's website includes all of the information that it should.

Pupils behave well in class. They are polite and courteous. They say bullying is rare and the school's own information confirms this. On occasions, pupils are boisterous when playing outside.

Staff are preparing pupils well for life in a modern Britain. Pupils understand the school values of being friendly, being ready to learn and understanding others' differences. Pupils listen to the views of others and are able to talk about respecting faiths and cultures other than their own.

Most staff said that leaders consider their workload and well-being. Subject leaders feel they have the time to improve teaching in their subjects.

Most parents and carers speak positively about the school. They would recommend the school to others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in keeping children safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

When checked, there were some gaps in information used to check and vet staff. This was rectified by the end of the inspection.

The school uses a computerised system for recording concerns. Occasionally, school leaders do not act on these concerns quickly enough. By the end of the inspection, they had reviewed their systems to make sure there was swift action following any concerns. No pupils were put at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils who arrive in Year 3 with weak reading skills do not achieve well. This is because leaders have not ensured that the teaching of phonics is systematic and regular. Pupils are taught new phonemes, but quickly forget them because they have not practised them well enough in lessons or in their reading. The books that pupils read are not always matched to the sounds that they know and need to practise. Leaders should ensure that staff receive effective training so that they know the important principles of teaching systematic, synthetic phonics. Training should also be provided to the literacy leader so that she is able to check on the effect phonics teaching is having on pupils' understanding and give guidance to staff. Leaders should also ensure that the books pupils read are matched to the sounds that they know.
- The impact of the reading curriculum lacks consistency. This is because curriculum plans do not specify what knowledge is required in each year. Too much is left up to the teacher. This has led to pupils' vocabulary remaining fairly basic. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans are clear about the knowledge that pupils will acquire, particularly how pupils' vocabulary will improve.
- Not all teachers implement the mathematics curriculum to the same standard. In some classes, teachers are extremely adept at getting the best out of pupils by improving their fluency, mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. However, in other classes this is not the case. Curriculum plans are at the early stages of being written, consisting only of headings. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are adequately trained and that the best practice in school is shared more widely. Curriculum plans need to be more detailed in the specific knowledge that pupils should be building up over time.
- Curriculum plans in science outline clearly how pupils build on the knowledge they gain in each year. Plans also specify the scientific vocabulary pupils learn in each year group. Leaders should ensure that pupils are given enough opportunities to apply their new knowledge to practical problems and investigations.
- There are some opportunities for pupils to take part in music, for example by taking part in the choir that runs for part of the year. However, leaders must ensure that the curriculum for music is structured to develop pupils' knowledge in line with the national curriculum.
- Currently, the school website lacks some important information. The governing body must ensure that the school's website meets statutory requirements. This is particularly in relation to equality objectives which must be updated at least every four years.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	107037
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10110764
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Walsh
Headteacher	Mark Hinchliff
Website	www.brookhousejunior.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 January 2016

Information about this school

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to that in other schools around the country.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club on the premises which is run by an outside provider.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. I met with four members of the governing body and several groups of children.
- I undertook deep dives into the following subjects: mathematics, reading, science and music. This involved a meeting with subject leaders; visits to a sample of lessons in these subjects; listening to pupils read; work scrutiny of books and other kinds of work produced by pupils who were part of classes observed by inspectors; and discussion with teachers and a group of pupils from the lessons observed.

- I reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation, development plans and information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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