

Inspection of a good school: Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School

Brent Street, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4EQ

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Christopher Burman. This school is part of Wessex Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gavin Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Brian Kirkup.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is at the heart of the village. The school's vision, 'Let your light shine', aims to encourage all pupils to do their best. Pupils live up to this. They talk about the values they learn at school, such as respect and hope. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning.

Pupils are happy to come to school and enjoy learning. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well. They support one another and have warm, trusting relationships with staff. Pupils understand difference and are welcoming and accepting. As a result, pupils feel safe.

The school ensures that there are wider opportunities available. Pupils enjoy day trips that bring the curriculum to life, such as visits to London. Pupils develop their leadership skills. They take part in environmental or fundraising 'communities' that encourage them to be good citizens. Pupils value the clubs that the school provides, such as basketball, cooking, martial arts and gardening. Clubs are well attended by all, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All those who responded to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, would recommend the school to other families.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has joined the Wessex Learning Trust. The trust and the school opened a provision for two- and three-year olds in 2021. The school has considered what children learn in the pre-school and builds on this well in Nursery and Reception. Children in the early years get off to a good start. Staff recognise the importance of developing pupils' language and social skills. Children are confident,

independent and engage well with others. At the end of the early years, most children are ready for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.

The school promotes reading well. Developing a love of books begins in the early years. The school ensures that high-quality books form an essential part of learning for all children. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start Reception. Extra support is quickly put in place for pupils who need it. Pupils in key stage 2 read a range of engaging texts, including novels and non-fiction. The school makes sure pupils understand the significance of books. These are carefully selected to ensure that pupils learn about diversity and other cultures. Older pupils read fluently with expression and a real sense of understanding.

In English and mathematics, staff introduce new learning to pupils effectively. New learning builds on what the children already know. However, in some other subjects, the school has not yet ordered the content of the curriculum with enough precision to ensure that new ideas build on what pupils have previously learned. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. In English and mathematics, staff check what pupils know and remember from previous lessons. Staff provide time for pupils to revisit prior concepts, when needed, before moving on to new learning. In some other subjects this is not done as precisely as in English and mathematics.

The school is skilled at identifying the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Staff support the learning of pupils with SEND well. The school ensures that pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as other pupils. The school has created bespoke strategies to support a small number of pupils. This helps these pupils to achieve well.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils' personal development, including through assemblies and the curriculum. Pupils sing in local music festivals, perform traditional country dancing, and take part in many trips and visits that enhance their wider development. Pupils are enthusiastic about these activities.

Trust and school leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff are positive about working at the school and value the support that they receive.

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 curriculum thinking is not based on a precise enough understanding of what pupils learn and when they learn it. As a result, some pupils are not able to build on their prior knowledge. The school and the trust need to ensure that weaker areas of the curriculum are developed and implemented to the same quality as the more successful areas.

- The school is in the initial stages of refining assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics. Staff do not precisely understand how well pupils are learning the curriculum over time. The school and the trust need to strengthen assessment so that they are more knowledgeable about the impact the curriculum is having on pupils' 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 predecessor school, Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School, to be good in March 2015.

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	146942
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10268490
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Brian Kirkup
CEO of the trust	Gavin Ball
Headteacher	Christopher Burman
Website	www.brentknoll.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Wessex Learning Trust.
- The trust and the school opened a provision for two- and three-year-olds in 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils with education, health and care plans.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character was carried out in June 2016.

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 his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. He also met with the chief executive of the trust, members of the trust leadership team, trustees and the local governing board.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. He also considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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