

Inspection of a good school: Bruton Primary School

Higher Backway, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0DP

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 March 2022

Outcome

Bruton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Bruton Primary School are happy and feel safe. They like coming to school. Staff and pupils build strong relationships. Pupils trust adults. There is a range of effective support for pupils that may require it. For example, pupils speak positively about going to 'The Nest' when they feel they need some extra help.

Pupils understand the school's rules and values. They appreciate why these are important. Pupils behave well in lessons and throughout the day. They are respectful and tolerant of each other. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. However, they say that bullying is rare. If it happens, staff usually resolve issues speedily.

Pupils learn well through an ambitious curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. However, there are still some subjects that are not yet as well developed or coherently sequenced as others. This means that some pupils do not consistently progress as well as they could across the whole curriculum, including in the early years foundation stage (EYFS).

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has been through much change, including key appointments to senior leadership positions and governance. Following the arrival of the executive headteacher and other senior leaders, the school has continued to improve. Senior leaders work closely with an effective governing body. Together, they are ambitious for pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders are not complacent. They are effective in recruiting and developing talent at all levels. Staff feel supported and empowered. Leaders ensure that teachers' workload is managed well. Leaders have established a positive and nurturing environment for pupils and staff alike.

Leaders are taking a strategic approach to developing the curriculum. Despite some interruptions caused by the pandemic, this is working well. As a result, the school has a

suitably ambitious curriculum for pupils. Leaders ensure that teachers know what they expect pupils to learn and by when. Some subjects are particularly strong. In mathematics and science, pupils deepen their knowledge through well-sequenced and coherent blocks of learning. Pupils know and remember more. They demonstrate strong knowledge and can explain complex scientific and mathematical concepts. Teachers have a consistent approach to teaching core content, such as number. Nevertheless, some subjects are not as well developed. History and art are not planned or sequenced with the same level of precision. As a result, the quality of education for pupils remains inconsistent in some subjects.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading. Leaders have established an effective early reading and phonics programme, including in Reception. This gets children off to a good start. Children quickly learn to recognise the letters and sounds they must know. The curriculum is organised and sequenced effectively to build phonic knowledge well over time. Consequently, pupils learn to read well. Despite this, phonics books do not consistently match the letters and sounds pupils need to know closely enough, particularly for those who have fallen behind. This can be a barrier at a vulnerable stage in their development of reading.

Leaders and those with responsibility for pupils with SEND are ambitious. They have established strong systems and processes to check how well pupils are progressing. Staff know the pupils well. As a result, staff implement and check high-quality individual learning plans that make a difference for the pupils and prepare them for any challenges they face.

Leaders promote pupils' well-being and their wider personal development effectively. Pupils are keen to participate and take active roles to improve the school. For example, they enjoyed the whole-school sponsored swim effort to raise funds for the school library, and they speak enthusiastically about the links to a school in Zambia. There is a range of opportunities and activities that enable pupils to be caring, reflective and responsible citizens. Pupils develop a keen awareness of the importance of community. They respect individual rights and understand British values, to be prepared well for the world around them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They ensure that pre-employment checks, safeguarding procedures and training are implemented appropriately. Staff take timely action to keep pupils safe, for example, when making referrals to local child protection services. Leaders promote pupils' well-being effectively. Staff work closely with pupils to help them manage their mental and emotional health on a daily basis, particularly for the most vulnerable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The most precise steps of knowledge that pupils need in order to make the best possible progress have not been identified for some subjects. As a result, pupils do not consistently learn as well as they could across the whole curriculum, including in the EYFS. Leaders must ensure that all subjects are well sequenced, with coherent and logical steps to deepen pupils' knowledge.
- The school has an effective phonics programme for pupils. However, there is a lack of consistency in ensuring that pupils' phonics books match the precise letters and sounds that they need to learn, particularly for those who need to catch up. This holds them back in their reading recovery. Leaders must make sure that the planned progression of phonics, including identified sounds for targeted pupils, is matched precisely to the books that pupils are given to read.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as section 5 inspection immediately.

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

If you are the school and you are 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	123899
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10199642
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Simpson
Headteacher	Rachael Bisset
Website	www.brutonprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the East Somerset Federation, which includes another local primary school.
- The school has an executive headteacher and head of school, who work together to run both schools in the federation.
- The school is arranged through a combination of classes, with some straight and mixed-age classes from Reception to Year 6.
- There is a single governing body that operates both schools in the federation.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science.

- For each deep dive, the inspector met with the curriculum leader and subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at individual plans for pupils with SEND to evaluate how well these are being implemented.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their personal, social, health and economic education and well-being.
- The inspector looked at the single central record and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, who is also the executive headteacher.
- The inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate the effectiveness of SEND provision and practice in the school.
- The inspector had a telephone call with a representative school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with different staff members and met with groups of pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The inspector met with a representative group of governors, which included the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector reviewed key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans, minutes of governing body meetings and monitoring records.
- The lead inspector checked survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents and carers. This included taking the 68 responses to Ofsted's free-text service into account.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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