

Inspection of a good school: Brooksward School

Tower Drive, Neath Hill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK14 6JZ

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

Brooksward School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils benefit from attending this inclusive school. They are proud to show their values of 'excellence, citizenship and innovation'. In showing these values, pupils reflect the high expectations that adults in school have for them. There is genuine care and trust between adults and pupils. Pupils know that adults in school want what is best for them. As such, they follow the guidance staff give them, which helps them make both academic and personal progress. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are able to integrate positively into school life.

Pupils are well prepared for life beyond primary school because of the school's focus on developing the whole child. Pupils learn how to make a positive contribution to society and gain leadership skills. They are proud to be part of the student council or to be playground leaders and reading buddies.

Pupils behave well in this school and are highly motivated to succeed. Social times are positive environments where adults and pupils interact with warmth and kindness. Pupils know about different types of bullying and how to recognise them. Incidents of bullying in school are very rare. As one pupil said, 'This is a bullying-free school.' Pupils know that leaders in the school take effective action to deal with any incidents if they do occur.

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

Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils in the school will achieve. They have taken into account the various starting points and experiences of pupils and created a curriculum which ensures equity for all. The provision for pupils with SEND is strong. The special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator is knowledgeable and tenacious in ensuring that these pupils have the right support. Staff are well trained to make adaptations to the curriculum so that all pupils will achieve well.

The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced which helps pupils build knowledge over time. In most subjects, leaders have decided the small steps of knowledge pupils need to

learn and in what order. This begins in Reception, where children secure important knowledge in reading and mathematics. This helps children in Reception to be ready for learning in Year 1.

In a small number of foundation subjects, while leaders know what they want pupils to achieve, they have not fully considered the small steps of knowledge that pupils will need to achieve it. Due to this, pupils are not consistently learning as well as they could throughout the entire curriculum. Leaders recognise this and are clear about their plans to refine these subject areas.

Leaders prioritise reading and make sure that children start learning to read as soon as they start in Reception. Staff have expert knowledge of phonics and teach the scheme well. They regularly check pupils' understanding and take swift action to put in place effective activities so all pupils can keep up. In other areas of the curriculum, teachers use assessment well to gather information about how pupils are doing. This means they quickly spot gaps in knowledge and are effective in helping pupils to close them. Due to this, pupils progress well through the intended curriculum and published end-of-key-stage outcomes are positive.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful learning environments. Pupils are motivated and positive learners and low-level disruption is very rare. Staff consistently and fairly apply the school's behaviour approach. They teach pupils from Reception onwards routines and rules that help them make positive choices. As a result, pupils understand the school's high expectations for behaviour and stick to them well.

Leaders have put in place a rich programme of clubs which are well attended by all, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. For example, as well as a variety of sports clubs, pupils attend science, circus and outdoor adventure clubs. Leaders recognise the diversity in the community by holding events such as 'cultural similarities week'. During this week, pupils and families share and celebrate the wide range of traditions and cultures in the community. Teachers build pupils' knowledge about equality and diversity. As a result, pupils are inclusive and know they should treat everyone the same, regardless of any difference.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. Leaders and governors have a strong moral drive to enable all pupils to experience success. They work well together to create an environment that supports the well-being and achievement of all. Staff are proud to work here, and leaders involve them in forming their vision for the school. Their workload is well balanced and for all staff, including those new to the profession, it is a happy and supportive place to work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture in this school is strong. Governors and leaders have clear oversight of safeguarding. Record-keeping and recruitment checks are robust.

Staff teach pupils about personal safety. Pupils have secure knowledge of issues such as consent and also know how to keep themselves safe online.

Leaders have trained staff well to recognise signs that a pupil or their family may need support. Staff are rigorous in sharing concerns, and leaders take swift action to respond to them. They are tenacious in their work with external agencies to ensure that families get the right help at the right time.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, the curriculum thinking is still being refined by leaders. As a result, pupils' learning is not consistent and they do not learn as well as they could across the entire curriculum. Leaders should now prioritise the consistent sequencing of the curriculum in these few areas.

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 school to be good in March 2013.

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	132210
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10241979
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Lewis
Headteacher	Jen Swain (Interim Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.brooksward.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The interim executive headteacher and chair of governors have taken up their posts since the last inspection.
- There is a before-school provision managed by the school which was part of the inspection.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the interim executive headteacher and other members of the leadership team. They also met with the chair of governors and five other members of the governing body.
- The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading,

mathematics and art. For each deep dive, they 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 inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers and also took into account their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school by speaking with leaders, staff and pupils. They met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss the arrangements for safeguarding. During these meetings, the inspector scrutinised records and sampled case files to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm. The inspector also examined the school's work to recruit and check on the suitability of staff, as well as checked the knowledge of staff about their responsibilities.

Inspection team

Nina Marabese, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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