

Inspection of a good school: Brownlow Primary School

Limes Avenue, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 1QL

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 2023

Outcome

Brownlow Primary School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of this school is Ian Toon. This school is part of Mowbray Education Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Christine Stansfield, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anne Frost. There is also an acting headteacher, Vicky Sellars, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Brownlow Primary is a school where 'children come first'. Staff care for pupils in a safe, nurturing and inclusive learning environment. They model kindness and respect. Parents and carers appreciate the support and guidance their children receive. One parent commented, 'Even though it's a big school, pupils are not just a number, staff know who everyone is.'

Pupils like coming to school. They appreciate the varied experiences open to them. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the clubs they have joined. For example they can take part in cricket, orienteering, canine behaviour club and German club. Leaders want every pupil to benefit from the vast array of activities provided. They offer 'golden tickets' to invite pupils to clubs to develop their talents and interests further.

Pupils know that the adults in school have high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils understand how important it is that everyone sticks to the school's four simple rules: be respectful, be kind, be self-regulated, and take care of yourself and your environment. They say that these rules are fair. They take responsibility for their own behaviour. Some pupils talk about how they have been helped to improve their behaviour. Pupils agree that their school is a calm and happy place to learn.

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

The school has written an ambitious curriculum matched to national expectations. The specific needs of pupils at Brownlow Primary School have also been considered in the curriculum design. The curriculum is sequenced with care. It sets out the logical order of

what pupils will learn from the early years to Year 6. Pupils start each unit of work with a question. For example, in Year 2 pupils learn about local history through the question, 'Have the swans in Melton always been white?' Pupils in Year 6 answer the question, 'How did the Second World War impact British children?' Pupils are taught the key knowledge they will need to answer these questions successfully. There is some variation in how precisely this important knowledge is identified across the foundation subjects.

Teachers follow the curriculum as it is intended to be taught. They present new information clearly. Their own subject knowledge is strong. However, in a few lessons they do not adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.

The school promotes a love of reading. Pupils are encouraged to become avid readers. This starts as soon as children join the school in the early years. Pupils regularly visit the school library to borrow a book. Story time is a key part of every day. Older pupils finish their day with a class novel. Pupils enjoy this time. It finishes their school day in a positive way.

The school ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to deliver the phonics programme well. Children in the early years get off to a good start. They know that their teacher expects them to give their full attention in phonics lessons and they must do 'good looking'. Frequent checks are made to ensure that pupils remember the sounds they have been taught. Extra support is provided for pupils who need more help to learn to read.

The school has clear systems in place to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is ambitious for these pupils. Helpful adaptation supports them to access the same curriculum as their peers. For example, some pupils with SEND who struggle to manage the busy nature of the classroom can complete their learning in the calm environment of the Galaxy Room.

The school's offer to widen pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They can apply for a range of jobs in the school community. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Older pupils are aware of what it means to leave a 'digital footprint'. Pupils have opportunities to perform in front of an audience, including representing the school at Melton's Last Night of the Proms. They learn to play a musical instrument and participate skilfully in their 'drumba' lessons. Pupils understand that it is wrong to be intolerant, or exclude, someone who is different.

The trust works closely with the school to ensure that the right priorities have been identified to improve the school. They balance support with challenge. They successfully hold leaders to account.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate that their workload and well-being are considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The precision with which the school has set out the small steps of learning that pupils need to make is variable across the foundation subjects. The key knowledge is not always clearly identified. The school must ensure that this important knowledge is explicitly identified so that teachers can support pupils effectively to reach the full ambition of the curriculum.
- Sometimes, teachers do not adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. On occasion, some pupils find learning too hard or too easy. The school must ensure that all teachers have the skills and confidence they need to adapt the curriculum to allow every pupil to do as well as they can.

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 to be good in September 2011.

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	140702
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10211638
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	544
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Frost
Executive headteacher	Ian Toon
Website	www.brownlowprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has been part of Mowbray Education Trust since April 2014.
- Since the previous inspection, an executive headteacher and two heads of school have been appointed. At the time of the inspection, the executive headteacher was seconded to another role within the trust. A head of school had been appointed as acting headteacher.
- The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provider.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, acting headteacher, head of school and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with three members of the trust, including the CEO.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons and spoke to teachers and pupils from the lessons visited. They also looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a member of staff.
- Inspectors reviewed further curriculum plans for geography, music and religious education and discussed their content with senior leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school, in classes and at social times. They spoke with pupils to gather their views about the school, including how well pupils behave.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff regarding the consideration leaders give to their workload and well-being. They also reviewed the responses to the staff survey.
- As well as speaking to parents at the start of the school day, inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text messages.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andy Lakatos

Ofsted Inspector

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