

Brackenwood Junior School

Norbury Avenue, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 2HH

Inspection dates

7–8 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Effective transition into Year 3 ensures that individual pupils' needs are swiftly identified and met effectively when they start Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in reading is particularly strong.
- Progress is good for all groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 and they now reach standards that are above average. Pupils' attainment in all subjects has improved in 2015 because of actions taken by school leaders to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Teaching is good in all year groups. Staff provide enjoyable and challenging opportunities for pupils to learn. Teaching assistants support pupils effectively and have a significant impact on raising achievement.
- The learning environment is purposeful. Staff and pupils work well together in an atmosphere that is calm and respectful.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite, courteous and value the opportunities that they get to learn at school. They speak about their school with pride and enthusiasm.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and feel safe and cared for well.
- School leaders have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and are ambitious for their success. The focus by leaders on improving the quality of teaching has ensured that all groups of pupils are making good progress and are achieving well.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's performance and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They work successfully with school leaders to continue to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not always as good as that of other pupils in all classes and all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or part lessons in all classes.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of staff, members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's most recent parental survey and correspondence received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered 27 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including assessment data, the school's evaluation of its work, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation, reports from school improvement partners, information about the management of teachers' performance, monitoring records and the school's improvement plan.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed samples of their work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, lunchtime, around the school and in lessons.

Inspection team

Clare Daniel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding the school receives for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are of White British origin.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to practise and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Ensure the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is always consistently as good as that of other pupils in all subjects and classes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have high expectations of all pupils. All staff work effectively to ensure that pupils make at least good progress, and behave well in lessons and around the school. As a result, all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in their learning.
- School leaders demonstrate a commitment to raising achievement for all pupils. Senior leaders check pupils' performance and the quality of teaching regularly and have a well-informed and accurate view of the standards currently achieved. Pupils are routinely assessed as they start in Year 3 and senior leaders carefully analyse this information to make sure that pupils new to the school are supported effectively.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and well informed, ensuring school leaders have a sound understanding of its current strengths and areas for improvement. The work of senior and middle leaders has successfully addressed the few small pockets of underachievement. As a result, all groups of pupils are making good progress.
- Middle leaders are effective in their work and have made a good impact on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They have successfully introduced new systems for assessing pupils' progress and ensured that staff use these regularly and with confidence. They check the quality of teaching, and ensure that professional development and training are effectively used to raise standards for all pupils.
- The leader with responsibility for overseeing the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs manages their provision well and, as a result, these pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- All teachers have performance targets that are directly linked to raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of their teaching. Senior leaders review these targets regularly throughout the year. They can demonstrate the impact that high-quality training and professional support have had on improving the quality of teaching. Pay awards are linked to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides many opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects. Pupils do not currently have as many opportunities to practise or develop their mathematical skills to the same extent in all classes. Learning is enriched with a wide range of trips and visits linked to curriculum themes, and cultural opportunities that pupils appreciate and talk about with enthusiasm.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is well supported through the curriculum. Assemblies provide pupils with opportunities to develop their spiritual understanding and to celebrate their achievements. Pupils also have many opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They have a number of responsibilities which they particularly enjoy, including being members of the school council and play leaders.
- Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about British values through the curriculum. Their understanding of democracy is particularly well developed through the work of the school council.
- Leaders effectively foster good relations, promote tolerance and tackle discrimination. Pupils and staff work together in a harmonious environment and pupils say that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The wide range of experiences the school offers pupils ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- School leaders carefully evaluate the spending and impact of the pupil premium funding and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress overall, albeit with some variation between classes and subjects.
- Leaders use the primary school sport funding effectively. They ensure pupils gain health benefits from an improved quality of teaching and the support of sports coaches. The impact is evident in increasing proportions of pupils who are taking part in a wider range of sporting activity.
- The local authority has provided light-touch support for the school because it is confident that senior leaders and governors have the capacity to continue driving up standards.
- The school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements and, as a result, pupils are safe and well cared for in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a well-informed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because the information shared with them by senior leaders is accurate. They challenge senior leaders effectively about improvements in the standards pupils reach and they check the school's performance regularly. They are ambitious about seeking further improvements for all pupils.
 - Governors have attended training offered by the local authority which has further developed their understanding of the school's performance through analysing national comparative performance data. They understand the impact the arrangements to manage the performance of staff have on improving

the quality of teaching and can articulate how this also affects raising pupils' achievement. Governors are involved in overseeing the school's systems for pay awards related to the performance of teaching staff, know how underperformance is tackled and are confident in senior leaders' capacity to do this effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to instructions and are keen to learn. They enjoy positive relationships with all staff and with each other. Staff provide a calm and well-managed learning environment in all classes.
- Pupils behave well around the school and are welcoming, polite and well mannered. They talk enthusiastically about their work, and are confident that teachers and support staff will help them with any difficulties or challenges.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good. They have a clear understanding of the school's systems of rewards and sanctions, and the effect these have on maintaining good order. Pupils report that the few rare incidents of weaker behaviour are managed fairly, promptly and consistently by staff in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school makes sure pupils behave well and deals effectively with bullying. While pupils say that there are a few very rare incidents of bullying, staff deal with them promptly and effectively.
- Behaviour records are detailed and senior leaders regularly conduct an analysis of them to enable them to support individual pupils effectively.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and most parents agree. Pupils say that adults in school help them quickly and effectively should they need support.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful. Pupils are proud of their school and value the way that staff care for them. They understand the school's behaviour management system and say that this helps to support pupils who find behaving well all the time a challenge.
- Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in and around the school, in the community and when using the internet. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including name-calling, but say that they would not be tolerated either by pupils or staff.
- Effective procedures are in place to keep vulnerable pupils safe. School leaders provided evidence to show how the school works effectively with other agencies, if it has concerns about a pupil's safety, in order to protect those who are particularly vulnerable.
- Attendance is currently average. The school follows up absences and any lack of punctuality effectively. The very few pupils with low attendance are well supported for this to improve.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff provide an exciting learning environment in all classes. Activities are well planned and ensure pupils are enthused by learning. Pupils enjoy respectful and purposeful relationships with all adults responsible for teaching and supporting them. The impact of teaching assistants and support staff on pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils are challenged in their learning and enjoy the opportunities to work on more difficult activities. Writing is taught well and pupils are given many opportunities to develop their writing skills through other subjects.
- Teachers ensure that support staff understand the focus of each session and have appropriate resources to work with groups and individuals. As a result of this high-quality support, most disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged make good progress.
- Teachers enable pupils to develop their reading skills effectively through other subjects. Pupils enjoy reading and have regular access to a wide range of texts to stimulate their enjoyment of and enthusiasm for books. An increasing proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in reading by the end of Year 6 because of high quality teaching
- Teachers ensure mathematical skills are taught well and pupils are currently making much stronger

progress than previously. However, opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects are currently limited.

- Pupils are fully involved in lessons and respond well to the effective questioning used by all teachers and support staff.
- Feedback given to pupils during lessons helps them to move on quickly and ensures that progress is good. Pupils' work is effectively marked in accordance with the school's policy. Pupils have opportunities to act on advice, correct their work and understand clearly how to move on to the next step in their learning. Teachers use assessment very effectively to monitor the progress that pupils make and to identify any gaps in their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well overall and make consistently good progress across the school from their individual starting points. Very few variations in the performance of groups in all subjects across the classes are evident, because teaching is of a consistently high standard. The school has an appropriate focus on improving achievement in reading and mathematics.
- In 2014 at the end of Year 6, standards achieved by pupils were broadly average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Recent assessment information indicates that standards have improved further in 2015 and are now above expectations for age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A greater proportion of pupils have made the expected amount of progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 than was the national average in 2014. The proportion of pupils who have made better-than-expected progress in these subjects is in line with the 2014 national average in reading and mathematics, but greater than that in writing.
- The progress of the most able pupils is good. The proportion of pupils working at the higher levels is greater than previously and improving across the school. The most able pupils apply their skills successfully across a range of subjects and tackle challenging work with confidence.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good overall. They make similar progress to that of their peers because their needs are met through well-planned and effective support which ensures they achieve well. However, the standards they attain are sometimes lower than their peers' because of their much lower starting points.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately one year behind that of other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2014. When compared to other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was approximately one year behind in mathematics, two terms in reading and one term in writing. As a much higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils have reached the expected and higher levels in 2015, the school is successfully narrowing the attainment gap for this group.
- In 2014, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making the expected amount of progress and better-than-expected progress was lower than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards attained by disadvantaged pupils in 2015 are still very marginally lower than that of their peers. The progress they have made from their starting points is good overall, but some variation in the progress made by these pupils between classes and subjects still remains. Current data indicate that this year, the progress made by Year 6 disadvantaged pupils from their starting points is more consistently good and the same as other pupils achieved nationally in 2014.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105013
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	461895

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Stanley
Headteacher	Conal Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
Telephone number	0151 608 3001
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