

Inspection of Brackenwood Junior School

Norbury Avenue, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside CH63 2HH

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They appreciate the welcoming and upbeat atmosphere at Brackenwood Junior School. Staff and pupils give visitors a warm welcome. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are proud of their school and of their learning. Pupils spoke excitedly about the upcoming residential trip and the many clubs that they can join.

The majority of pupils are confident that they can talk to any adult if they are worried about anything. They appreciate being able to post a comment into the school's 'worry monster' box if they have any issues or concerns. This helps most pupils to feel safe.

Classrooms are happy, busy and purposeful places. Leaders expect pupils to do their best and to behave well. Pupils mostly live up to these expectations. They feel that teachers are fair. Pupils like the fact that rules and rewards are clearer now. Pupils work hard and behave well.

Pupils talked proudly about raising money for the local hospice and other charities. They enjoy their roles of responsibility such as head boy or girl, play leaders and school ambassadors.

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

Leaders and staff have worked effectively to make noticeable improvements to their curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have clearly identified the content that pupils will learn and the order in which they will learn it. They ensure that pupils' learning is brought to life through a range of trips and visitors.

Developments in the curriculum have improved pupils' learning. They achieve well in most subjects. However, there are a few subjects where leaders have not identified the knowledge that pupils should gain. This hinders teachers from designing learning that helps pupils to build on what they already know.

Staff teach most curriculums with confidence. They show strong subject-specific knowledge. Teachers use assessment information well to shape future teaching and address pupils' misconceptions. Pupils enjoy their learning. Lessons are rarely disrupted by pupils' poor behaviour.

Leaders have ensured that reading is at the front and centre of their curriculum. Well-trained staff teach the phonics programme well. Pupils who find reading difficult receive effective and timely support when they start school. They read books which are well matched to their understanding of sounds and catch up quickly.

Class libraries are well stocked with high-quality texts that appeal to a wide range

of tastes. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading. They read with confidence and fluency.

Leaders have strengthened the identification of and support for pupils with SEND. This means that teachers increasingly adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can learn the same content alongside their peers.

The school's curriculum covers a wide range of topics and themes to enhance pupils' wider development. Pupils spoke about different faiths and beliefs with respect and understanding. They show a strong awareness of fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law.

Trust leaders, governors and staff work well together as part of a tight-knit and effective team. Trustees and governors use information effectively to identify strengths and priorities for further improvement.

Leaders and governors are alert to staff's workload and they are considerate of staff's well-being. Many parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors appreciate the positive changes that leaders have made to the school. However, a small minority still have some concerns, which leaders are working to address.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff receive helpful and regular safeguarding training so that they are alert to any changes in a pupil's behaviour or demeanour. Staff know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil's safety.

Leaders' and staff's record-keeping is rigorous so that they can monitor pupils' welfare and safety effectively. Leaders liaise well with parents and external agencies. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of curriculum subjects, leaders have not identified the knowledge that they want pupils to learn. At times, this hinders some pupils from learning all that they should. Leaders should make sure that staff are clear enough about the knowledge that pupils should learn so that they are able to design learning that builds on what pupils already know.

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	148292
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10241307
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Owens MBE
Headteacher	Claire Arnold (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.brackenwood-junior.wirral.sch.uk/web
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Brackenwood Junior School became part of Oak Trees Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in June 2017. When its predecessor school, Brackenwood Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector also spoke with the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer and the director of school improvement for the MAT. Inspectors

also spoke to members of the local governing body.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, science and geography. This involved discussions with subject leaders and teachers, as well as talking to pupils about their work. The inspectors visited lessons in these subjects and looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 reading to their teachers.
- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors analysed the school's records of recruitment checks on staff. The inspectors also spoke to staff and leaders about the school's procedures and systems for safeguarding pupils. The inspectors discussed with staff and pupils how the school teaches pupils to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and at social times.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Moira Atkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Louise McArdle

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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