

Brenzett Church of England Primary School

Straight Lane, Brenzett, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9UA

Inspection dates

2–3 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Outstanding, highly effective leadership has ensured that the school has improved significantly since joining the trust and now provides a good education for its pupils.
- School leaders and the trust leaders make a formidable strong team that has created a renewed, refreshed culture of achievement and aspiration.
- Staff are proud to work at the school and enjoy being there. Teaching and learning have improved and are good. As a result, pupils are making stronger progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils achieve the expectations for their ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, too few achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Additional funding is used well to support the learning of vulnerable pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well.
- Children have an outstanding start to education in the early years. Children make very good progress from their starting points. They thrive in a stimulating and motivating environment.
- Pupils enjoy a vibrant and exciting curriculum that stimulates them and inspires them to learn. It provides pupils with memorable learning experiences. The curriculum provides pupils with breadth in learning but not always enough depth in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Brenzett pupils are very welcoming, friendly and polite. They are proud of their school and their achievements. Their behaviour is excellent. They have very positive attitudes to school and learning.
- The school cares for and looks after its pupils exceptionally well. Their well-being and safety are high priorities. Pupils feel safe in the school. There are positive trusting relationships between staff and pupils. Safeguarding is effective.
- Leaders have worked very hard to improve attendance, which is now broadly at the national average.
- Governors know the school well and provide a good balance of support and challenge to leaders.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and appreciate the changes that have been made.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As leaders further develop the curriculum, ensure that it provides opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Raise attainment and ensure that more pupils from all groups achieve higher standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The commitment of the head of school and the executive headteacher to providing the best possible education for pupils is very strongly reflected in the united sense of purpose, determination and collaborative leadership of all the senior leaders, from the partner school and the trust.
- Since becoming an academy, high expectations, ambition and the pursuit of excellence have been shared by leaders at all levels. There is no complacency, but a relentless determination to build on current successes and secure further improvement.
- Many parents commented on the changes. One parent wrote:

‘The last two years have shown a massive improvement. Now all the teaching staff have settled I feel both my children are happy and making very good progress. It’s a lovely school with a very supportive team. I can’t praise the staff enough.’
- Improvements are evident, not least in the very culture and ethos of the school. It is a strikingly inclusive school. Everyone shares the head of school’s belief and unwavering determination that all pupils can achieve and that it is for the school to meet every child’s needs for this to be realised. There is also a commitment to providing the best for families and the community.
- Parents are very positive and supportive of the leadership and the opportunities offered to their children. One parent’s comment, echoed by several parents, was: ‘All the staff have worked incredibly hard to get the school back on track and it is now a wonderful, positive place for our child to attend.’
- The quality of teaching and learning remains a constant focus, and outcomes for pupils are improving. The collaborative culture that pervades the school is exceptionally strong and clearly benefits staff and pupils. There is a tight network of support, coaching and mentoring.
- Senior leaders are outward looking and look to the latest educational research to inform decision making. The head of school is very actively involved in working with other professionals.
- All staff, in responding to Ofsted’s survey, expressed their confidence in the leadership. They are proud to work at the school and feel well supported. Staff value the high-quality professional development opportunities available to them to enhance and develop their skills. Sharing expertise extends across and beyond the trust. Senior leaders set great store in developing leadership skills.
- Leaders know the school’s strengths and weaker aspects of the school extremely well, through incisive and effective checks on the quality of teaching and learning, and on pupils’ progress. As a result, priorities are correctly identified, and detailed plans for further improvement are established.
- Vulnerable pupils are supported extremely well and leaders work productively with parents, staff and other agencies when appropriate. There is an uncompromising commitment to these pupils doing at least as well as their peers, through appropriate

support. Expert and skilled leadership by the head of school of the provision for pupils with SEND ensures that teachers are very responsive to individual needs.

- Additional funding is used very well. Potential barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils are identified and actions are taken to reduce or overcome these. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making good progress academically and in their personal development. The sports funding is used very effectively to increase pupils' skills and engagement in sports and exercise and promote healthy lifestyles so that pupils make good choices.
- The school's Christian values of friendship, trust, compassion, forgiveness, community and respect are woven into school life and have a demonstrable impact on its culture and ethos. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of fundamental British values permeate everything the school does.
- The curriculum is central to pupils' increased enjoyment of the school and their improving outcomes. It is an ambitious, innovative curriculum that is coherently planned. A display in the library shows an overview of the progression in knowledge and skills for all the subjects. Pupils demonstrate that they understand how it all fits together by talking about it. It is a broad and balanced curriculum that is planned very carefully to engage all pupils. Leaders are rightly developing the curriculum further, as there is breadth but not always sufficient depth to learning.
- Pupils have opportunities to participate in a wealth of experiences and develop curious, enquiring minds. The Forest School is an exceptionally strong resource run by a fully trained member of staff. Music has a very high profile. Clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum, as does the community focus. These activities motivate pupils and make a significant contribution to their personal and academic development by broadening their horizons and raising their aspirations.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school very well. They have a range of skills that enable them to support the school effectively and challenge leaders appropriately.
- The local governing board is fully accountable to trustees and is challenged and held to account by them. In turn, they hold school leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Governors share the ambition and aspiration for the school and its pupils and work very effectively with trust members, senior leaders and staff.
- Governors are well informed by senior leaders and through their own monitoring work. Information about pupils' progress is scrutinised and probing questions are asked.
- Governors have oversight of additional funding, ensuring it is used effectively to make a difference for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The training for all staff is up to date and everyone is fully aware of their responsibilities to protect pupils and keep them safe.
- Procedures are well established and staff know what to do to identify, report and record any concerns. They are vigilant in doing so.
- Efficient and well-organised records are kept. This means that information can be shared quickly with external agencies should the need arise, so that pupils receive appropriate and timely help. Recruitment checks are completed on all adults who work with the pupils.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school, and staff and parents agree that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils are encouraged and taught to be responsible for their own safety too. They are encouraged to take considered and sensible risks, while being fully aware of the boundaries that are not to be crossed. This is very evident when pupils are in the Forest School.
- Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out in the school and for the many trips that are made.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved. Senior leaders have provided effective support by providing excellent role models and individual coaching. Teaching assistants generally work closely with teachers and make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils clearly enjoy learning and attempt to learn new skills with enthusiasm, even though this is quite challenging for some. Pupils are very supportive of each other in their learning and work together well. Leaders have set great store in developing pupils' self-esteem and resilience, so that they are more skilled as learners across the whole curriculum.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and good questioning skills, which they use well to check on pupils' understanding and clarify any misconceptions. Teachers are increasingly skilled at helping pupils build their knowledge by remembering what they have already learned. Pupils benefit from teachers' subject specialisms, such as in music.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and make sure that they plan learning activities that engage and motivate pupils and meet their individual needs as well as their interests.
- Pupils said that teachers help them learn. They are secure in the knowledge that teachers will help them if they do not understand or are stuck.
- In mathematics, a consistent approach to teaching has helped strengthen pupils' progress. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics and that it is fun. Pupils are developing

their mathematical reasoning skills and are becoming increasingly adept at explaining their thinking.

- Phonics skills are taught using the agreed phonics programme. Teachers follow this closely to ensure that the teaching of phonics is systematic. Teachers read to their pupils and ensure that they are exposed to a range of good-quality literature. Pupils enjoy the online reading programmes, which are helping to develop reading stamina and comprehension.
- Pupils' writing skills have improved. There is a strong focus on pupils using a dictionary to support their spelling and a thesaurus to promote a rich vocabulary. Year 2 pupils produced some well-structured and informative writing inspired by their trip out the previous day. Pupils have many opportunities to write in subjects other than English. Pupils enjoy writing for a range of different purposes, whether writing to The National Trust, entering a writing competition, or writing poetry about chocolate, based on Michael Rosen's work.
- The overall picture is of securely good teaching. Within this picture, however, work and expectations are not always demanding enough to stretch and challenge pupils to achieve higher standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders place the well-being of pupils at the heart of the school's work. They have created a very happy and secure environment, and pupils love coming to the school. Many parents commented on how happy their children are at the school. One parent summed this up with the comment: 'They walk in with smiles on their faces in the mornings.'
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to the school and learning, which helps them make good progress. They want to do well, work hard and are proud of their achievements. The school is very calm and purposeful and a safe, nurturing place to be. Vulnerable pupils receive appropriate and exceptional care to support their social and emotional well-being.
- Pupils are very polite and friendly. They play and learn together extremely well. They are kind and caring and very respectful of each other and adults. They make strong friendships and promote the inclusive ethos of the school exceptionally well.
- There are very strong, trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils said that there is no bullying in the school but that they are very confident to turn to adults should they have any concerns. They said they feel very safe in the school. They learn how to keep safe in a range of situations in and out of the school, including understanding how to keep safe online.
- Staff are unwavering in their work to boost pupils' confidence, self-esteem and aspirations, enabling them to thrive. Parents agree that their children are well looked after and happy at the school. One parent wrote: 'Great communication, very caring

staff and teachers. I have watched my children grow in confidence; they are so positive about learning in all areas.'

- The breakfast club provides a safe, sociable and friendly start to the day for those who attend.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well and help to create the calm, orderly atmosphere that pervades the school.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons to meet teachers' high expectations and clearly know what they should and should not do. They respond very well to teachers' requests and listen to them carefully.
- Pupils behave equally well at lunchtime, around the school and in the playground. Play is harmonious and energetic. Pupils enjoy organised sport, devising their own games, or, in the case of one group, creating their own book club, which they took very seriously.
- School records show that the number of any type of behaviour incidents has declined rapidly. Pupils who have particular behaviour needs are extremely well supported. They are helped to moderate and regulate their own behaviour through positive approaches. As a result, they achieve well and focus on their learning.
- Leaders have worked extremely hard to increase the school's overall attendance. As a result, attendance has improved to around the national average. Most pupils attend regularly, and the school goes above and beyond to support pupils and families where attendance persists as an issue.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The typically good and improving teaching means that current pupils are making good progress from their varied starting points in reading, writing and mathematics and across a range of foundation subjects. This is demonstrated in their books and in the school's records of individual pupils' progress.
- Published information on pupils' attainment and progress needs to be viewed with caution and it does not accurately reflect pupils' achievement. This is because the size of the cohort and of key groups, in each year, is very small, and numbers of pupils fluctuate during the year. In 2018, for example, one pupil represented around 10% of both the Year 2 and the Year 6 cohorts.
- Nevertheless, in 2018, it was clear that, by the end of Year 6, pupils had made weak progress in mathematics compared to their progress in reading and writing, and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was not good enough. A range of factors contributed to this, including a legacy of gaps in pupils' learning. However, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was much closer to the expectations for their age.

- Leaders' actions have strengthened progress, although it remains a little uneven across the year groups. There are still gaps in learning in key stage 2, but progress is at least good and in some cases very rapid, which is helping pupils to catch up. Pupils' attainment is clearly improving as a result. More pupils are achieving the age-related expectations; however, too few pupils are achieving the higher standards.
- Pupils are now making broadly similar progress in mathematics compared to progress in reading and writing. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are, as other pupils, increasing their rate of progress and they are learning as well as others. Senior leaders rigorously check on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. This enables pupils to receive early and specific support that meets their needs effectively to help them catch up. It enables pupils, whatever their needs, to participate fully in activities alongside other pupils.
- In the 2018 Year 1 phonics screening check, most of the pupils achieved the expected standard. Pupils use their phonics skills well to help them read and write unfamiliar words. Reading for enjoyment is promoted well from the Reception Year onwards, and pupils use their reading and writing skills well to learn across the curriculum subjects.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children are given an excellent start to school in the Reception Year. They make very strong progress, often from starting points that are below what is typical for their age, and catch up quickly.
- For the past two years, by the end of Reception, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above the national average. In the current year, the school's assessments, which are accurate, and observations of children indicate their excellent progress.
- The children are being taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. Careful and thoughtful planning ensures that children get the full benefit of the early years curriculum, with the added bonus of being with older pupils. By the end of the Reception Year, children are very well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.
- There are excellent procedures for getting to know the children before they start at the school. As well as home visits and visits to pre-school settings, children are invited into the school. For example, during the inspection, children who will be starting in September and their parents spent time with the current Reception children in the Forest School.
- Very positive relationships are established and continue throughout children's time in the early years. Staff know the children very well, and individual needs are identified very quickly. Children are supported in all aspects of their early development and thrive socially and emotionally. This helps to overcome barriers to learning and ensures that the children make very strong progress.
- Leaders have created an exceptionally stimulating and enabling environment. All areas of learning are promoted inside and outside. Teaching is highly effective. Early basic skills are taught very effectively and in fun ways. Questioning helps to develop children's language and vocabulary as well as their thinking and reasoning skills. Highly

stimulating activities both inside and outside the classroom spark children's curiosity, creativity and imagination. As a result, children are motivated, involved and engaged.

- Staff have clear and high expectations to ensure that children are safe and happy. Children's well-being is paramount. Their welfare needs are met extremely well, and all necessary actions are taken to support children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Children develop confidence and independence. They know how to stay safe, for example by wearing helmets when they ride the bikes and keeping themselves clean with aprons when they paint.
- Children learn to take risks and trust each other. They settle well, make friends quickly, co-operate with each other and behave well. Two children were having an animated conversation about the dinosaurs they had seen the day before on a trip to Wingham Wildlife Park. One child reminded the other that: 'they were only pretend you know, not real'. Another pair shared well when they were discovering dinosaur bones buried in the sand and informed me that they were, 'finding real treasure'.
- Leadership is dedicated and determined. The early years leader has welcomed the support and guidance from the trust to help enrich the environment, and strong leadership has had a considerable impact on the improvements in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	143517
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10102020

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Anne Locke and Laura Paine – co-chairs
Headteacher	Iain Witts (executive headteacher) Cassie Young (head of school)
Telephone number	01797 344 335
Website	www.brenzett.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@brenzett.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in October 2016. It is sponsored within the Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust (Aquila). The multi-academy trust has a board of trustees. The chief executive officer (CEO) and other members of the trust work closely with the school.
- The school works in partnership with another local trust school. There is an executive headteacher for both schools. The head of school at Brenzett leads the school for four days a week and the assistant headteacher of the partner school leads the school for the fifth day. There is a joint local governing body for both schools.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Currently the school has three classes with mixed age groups and one Year 2 class.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.

- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- The school is a Church of England primary within the Diocese of Canterbury. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in July 2017 and is due for reinspection in 2022.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes, accompanied by the head of school.
- The inspector examined samples of pupils' work and talked to individuals and groups of pupils about their learning and their views of the school. She heard some pupils read and observed pupils arriving at school and their behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school and the assistant headteacher from the partner school, as well as with other leaders in the school and from the trust. Meetings were held with the CEO and chair of the trust, the co-chairs of the local governing board and two other governors.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including: leaders' checks on the school's performance and the quality of teaching and learning; the school plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- There were 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, including 14 free-text comments. The inspector spoke to some parents at the start of the day. The inspector took account of 15 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 14 to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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