

Inspection of a good school: Meole Brace Church of England Primary and Nursery

Church Road, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9HG

Inspection dates:

12–13 November 2019

Outcome

Meole Brace Church of England Primary and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Meole Brace school is at the heart of the local community. Senior leaders work well together to maintain the good standard of education. The school's values of 'community, respect and perseverance' weave through the school's curriculum and ethos. This has resulted in positive changes across the school.

Pupils enjoy the school and they learn a lot. The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective. By the time they leave, pupils reach high standards in these subjects.

There is a friendly feel to this school, which pupils, staff, parents and carers appreciate. Pupils say that they feel safe and the relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils understand how to treat one another well. They are clear about what bullying is, or is not. Pupils know that they can get help from adults to sort out any problems they may have.

Pupils have many opportunities for visits out. External visitors help to enrich the curriculum. Pupils can take part in lots of school clubs, including sport, music, art and crafts. Pupils also enjoy taking on responsibilities in school, such as reading with younger pupils or helping out at lunchtimes with games and activities.

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

Children in the early years enjoy a well-resourced area in which to learn. They access an impressive range of activities that stimulate their language development. Routines help children get used to the school and manage their feelings well. Staff work hard to engage children to help them learn their early sounds. More children are now achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. This is because staff understand exactly what children need to learn next and plan appropriate activities accordingly. Children are well prepared for their transition to Year 1.

Staff help children to learn to read successfully. Phonics starts in Nursery and continues to be taught daily. By the time pupils reach Year 3, most are reading fluently. There are lots of opportunities to read in class at the start of every day and in the afternoon. Additionally, those who fall behind have extra sessions with well-trained staff.

Pupils take responsibility for reading with their friends. This helps build pupils' reading fluency and confidence. Older pupils talk with self-assurance about their favourite books and authors and how they use the school's library. However, younger pupils have fewer opportunities to use the library.

In history, lessons are well planned. This ensures that the historical knowledge and skills that leaders have selected are learned by pupils. For example, pupils think carefully about information they could gather from Anglo-Saxon artefacts. Younger pupils think about why Boudicca lost a battle against the Romans. Staff make links to the school values through the curriculum. One pupil said, 'Boudicca had to persevere, like we do.' Currently, some of the tasks that teachers plan do not make clear whether there is a history or an English focus, and some learning gets lost. Leaders need to ensure that the plans in place reflect what is taught.

Computing is less well developed and some staff have not yet received the training they need to teach computing well. Leaders have invested in a new suite of computers to provide the curriculum opportunities needed. For example, pupils are now using coding tools to make animations and sprites move. Because the suite is very new, leaders' subject plans have only recently begun to be put into practice.

Teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. They are well supported and staff understand their specific needs well. This helps pupils make strong progress.

Behaviour is good at all times of the day, and there is little lost learning time. Pupils look out for one another. At lunchtime, 'prefects' get to help other pupils and classes to make the most of the break.

Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to help and develop themselves at the school, such as taking part in the school council and eco-council. Assembly themes are shaped by the school values. These help pupils prepare for life in modern Britain. Many pupils learn musical instruments. Pupils can represent the school in a range of competitive sports.

The school is well led and staff are committed to working together to improve the curriculum offer further. Leaders recognise the need for greater consistency across the school in how the curriculum is delivered. Staff value the efforts of leaders to balance the work they do and say that they feel supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety and well-being are high priority. Staff training is up to date and appropriate. Staff know what to do when pupils share concerns with them. Pupils are confident to talk to staff if they have a problem. Correct checks are made on staff before they start working at the school. The school works with external agencies to get help for pupils and families at the right time. Pupils understand the range of dangers they face. They use the knowledge they have gained to make sensible decisions, such as keeping personal information safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have developed a set of curriculum plans that help teachers understand what to teach and when to teach it. However, teachers are not using these plans consistently well. This means that the subject-specific content can be missed. Subject leaders should continue to develop their role in making sure staff deliver the curriculum plans effectively.
- Some of the subject plans have been recently developed, for example in computing. Not all staff have sufficient subject knowledge to deliver lessons in these subjects effectively. Consequently, pupils' learning is inhibited. Leaders should ensure that staff develop their subject-specific knowledge and skills, so that pupils learn all the selected content well.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Meole Brace Church of England Primary and Nursery to be good in November 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	135789
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10111756
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joseph Bentley
Headteacher	Henry Bray
Website	www.meolebraceceprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school care.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been in post for one year.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I focused on the following subjects: reading, history and computing. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects are planned and taught. I talked to leaders about other subjects and spoke with pupils, staff, governors and parents about the school curriculum.
- I examined external performance information about the school and looked at school documents and the school's website.
- I talked to pupils, staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. I examined the record of pre-employment checks on school staff, looked at other school records and discussed individual cases with leaders.
- I watched pupils' behaviour in class and at other times of the school day. I spoke to staff, pupils and parents about standards of behaviour over time.

- I had formal meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, subject leaders, governors, the local authority school improvement adviser, staff and pupils. I talked informally with pupils, staff and parents to gather information about school life.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 85 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. I considered these along with the 61 free-text responses made by parents. I also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Richard Kentish, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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