

Brackley Church of England Junior School

Address: Manor Road, BRACKLEY, Northamptonshire, NN13 6EE

Unique reference number (URN): 121961

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have made regular school attendance a high priority. Pupils typically attend regularly. Leaders work with determination to remove any barriers to regular attendance that pupils may face. Working with parents, carers and external agencies, leaders build effective support plans for pupils who find school attendance difficult. In most circumstances, pupils overcome challenges and attend school. However, there are some disadvantaged pupils needing further help.

Leaders and staff share their high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils follow the clear routines that leaders and staff have in place. In lessons, pupils typically focus on their learning. When facing something tricky, pupils show determination and keep trying. During group tasks, pupils work well together. In line with the school's values, they celebrate the success of their peers wholeheartedly. On the playground, pupils have fun together exploring the well-designed activities and resources leaders provide. When friendships become strained, and on the rare occasions of bullying, staff support pupils effectively to restore positive relationships.

Staff support well those pupils with social, emotional and mental health challenges who find it hard to manage big emotions and maintain positive behaviour. As a result, these pupils learn how to regulate their behaviour. They build positive relationships with their peers and staff.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is well designed to ensure that pupils have the knowledge they need in preparation for secondary school. Curriculum plans are well organised so that pupils learn in a logical order and can build what they know and understand over time.

Teachers typically teach the curriculum well, including meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The new leadership team has clarified the teaching approaches it expects. Leaders also introduced staff training to improve areas of the curriculum. As a result, teaching has improved notably in mathematics and writing. Similarly, staff are improving the way they adapt learning activities for pupils with SEND. However, leaders have ongoing work to continue improvements to pupils' writing, including their handwriting.

Leaders routinely check the quality of teaching. This includes checking that learning activities are appropriate to the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. When they find less effective practices, they ensure that improvements are made.

The teaching of reading is well established. Staff follow leaders' chosen approach systematically. They ensure that pupils become fluent readers who understand the range of texts they read. Staff help pupils who find reading tricky so that they become confident, fluent readers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have well-established processes to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work with external specialists to clarify the exact needs of these pupils and build effective support plans. Leaders' guidance ensures that staff precisely understand pupils' needs and how best to support them. Owing to the training in place, staff are developing their expertise in how to adapt learning activities to meet pupils' needs. Leaders regularly check how well the support for pupils with SEND is working. When necessary, leaders ensure that improvements are made.

Many parents and carers of pupils with SEND are frustrated by the school's provision for these pupils. Many have concerns about the turbulent staff situation impacting on pupils with SEND. Similarly, many feel that leaders' communication with parents is not working to allay concerns and build partnerships between school and parents. Leaders have largely resolved the staffing and leadership issues. Leaders have not improved communication.

Leaders and staff's efforts to support disadvantaged pupils generally work well. Leaders and staff understand the unique needs of these pupils. Leaders ensure that additional funds are research-informed and targeted at pupils' exact needs. Leaders check staff's work to enable these pupils to overcome barriers and learn the curriculum well. These pupils achieve outcomes in national tests in line with national averages.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The programme for personal development is well designed to prepare pupils for life beyond primary school. For example, staff help pupils learn about the world of work by thinking about career options. Leaders also ensure that pupils learn about the fundamental British values. Pupils understand that British society is underpinned by the rule of law and the role of Parliament in setting laws. They have opportunities to practise democratic activities, such as taking part in 'pupil parliament' elections. Pupils also learn how to value the differing views people may have about key issues. During discussions, pupils listen patiently to others and offer alternative views sensitively. Staff also prepare pupils well to live happily alongside those with different beliefs and lifestyles.

Staff ensure that pupils understand how to maintain healthy lifestyles. For example, pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. They also learn how to identify their feelings and communicate them clearly to others. Leaders provide bespoke pastoral support to pupils who need extra help to understand their emotions. Staff teach pupils the features of positive relationships. They learn how to resolve disagreements positively without resorting to conflict. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe. They understand the risks they face at home, in the community and when online. They also know what to do when concerns arise.

Pupils appreciate and benefit from the opportunities to develop their interests and talents, particularly in sport. They also value the educational visits staff arrange to enrich the curriculum and support personal development. For example, pupils speak enthusiastically about how they develop confidence and independence when taking part in residential trips far away from home and the local community. Leaders use additional funding to ensure that

disadvantaged pupils have access to the school's enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Though improving, it is still the case that pupils learn some areas of the curriculum well and are less accomplished in others. Outcomes in national tests in reading are in line with national averages. However, in mathematics and writing, this is not consistently the case. This means that pupils are not fully prepared for secondary school in some areas of the curriculum. In contrast, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in national tests are in line with national averages.

Leaders' work to improve pupils' understanding of the foundational knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics is making a difference, but there is more to do. Pupils generally enjoy reading. They capably read the texts they study across the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils' responses in lessons and work in books show that pupils are gaining confidence and learning well. Pupils' writing, though improving, continues to be less well developed than it could be. This includes pupils' handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

The school has been through a substantial amount of turbulence, including changes to staffing. Nonetheless, leaders and staff have improved the school through periods of difficulty. The new leadership team has successfully made necessary improvements to the quality of teaching and learning at the school. It thoroughly checks how well the curriculum is delivered, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders direct training precisely at the key areas needing to improve. Staff appreciate and benefit from the training they receive.

Governors have established a clear vision and ethos for the school that is understood and realised by leaders and staff. In carrying out their duties, governors ensure that leaders act solely in the best interest of pupils. However, governors do not ensure they receive sufficient information about the quality of the school's provision. For example, governors do not receive enough information about subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, governors are not fully in touch with staff and parents to understand their views of the school. As a result, their ability to hold leaders accountable for their work is limited.

Staff are proud to work at the school. However, leaders have not ensured that all staff are clear about the changing roles and responsibilities of some staff and leaders. As a result, when staff need support about an aspect of their work, they are not always certain where to get help. Similarly, this lack of certainty has contributed towards some staff not knowing what to prioritise in their work and feeling obliged to undertake unreasonable amounts of

work. Parents and carers have been equally frustrated by leaders' weak communication and the lack of clarity over who can help parents when needs arise.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils understand and live up to the school's well-established values. They routinely show care for others. In the mornings, pupils greet their peers and staff warmly. Typically, pupils are well mannered and conduct themselves sensibly. When needs arise, pupils willingly help others. For example, pupils set up the dinner hall in preparation for lunch. They also show commitment to the school community by taking up positions of responsibility. On the playground, older pupils serve as 'play leaders', leading games for younger pupils to enjoy. This supports younger pupils to learn the school's values and learn how to play positively. Within the school's caring ethos, pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare. When it happens, staff deal with it effectively so that it stops and does not reoccur.

Pupils enjoy school and learning so they typically attend regularly. They have benefited from the improved teaching at the school. As a result, achievement is starting to improve, though there is more work to do. In some subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Pupils' outcomes in national tests are not consistently in line with national averages.

Leaders and staff place high priority on the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have invested in staff training to ensure that staff know how best to support these pupils. Consequently, these pupils generally do well in school.

Next steps

- Governors should ensure that they receive the precise information they need to understand the quality of the school's provision and the perceptions of staff and parents. They should use this information to hold leaders to account.
 - Leaders should improve the way they communicate with parents and carers and staff, so that stakeholders understand the roles and responsibilities of staff and leaders in order to gain whatever information or support they need in a timely manner.
 - Leaders should help staff prioritise their work so that they do not feel obliged to undertake an unreasonable amount of work.
 - Leaders should continue the work to improve the teaching of writing, including handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar, so that pupils achieve consistently in line with national averages.
 - Leaders should continue the work to ensure all disadvantaged pupils maintain regular attendance.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Colin Harber.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the chair of the governing body, governors, local authority representatives, a representative from the diocese, the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils during the inspection.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in April 2026.

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The headteacher joined the school in September 2024.

Headteacher: Beth Akers

Lead inspector:

Al Mistrano, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, Ofsted Inspector

Martyn Skinner, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

221

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

240

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

14.48%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.90%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

25.34%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	57%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	53%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	71%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	82%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	57%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	71%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	44%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	86%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	88%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	71%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	100%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	59%	Above

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	58%	68%	-10 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	71%	67%	4 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	66%	-4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	74%	80%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	86%	80%	6 pp
2022/23 (final)	88%	78%	9 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	58%	78%	-20 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	71%	78%	-6 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	63%	77%	-15 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	74%	80%	-6 pp
2024/25 (final)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	100%	79%	21 pp
2022/23 (final)	75%	79%	-4 pp

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	4.2%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	12.8%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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