

Inspection of a good school: Branston Junior Academy

Station Road, Branston, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN4 1LH

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 May 2023

Outcome

Branston Junior Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Many pupils say that the school is 'amazing'. Pupils have strong, positive relationships with staff. Staff know each pupil well. This is a school in which pupils feel safe and happy.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. This is both for what they can achieve academically and also how they should behave. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils say they would try to resolve a fall out independently. They also know that staff will always help them if they report poor behaviour or a concern.

Pupils are keen to learn. They look forward to many of the subjects that they study. Teachers have embedded the school's '5Rs' values throughout the curriculum. Pupils are proud to collect stamps in their planners for demonstrating these values. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' strength of character.

The majority of parents have positive views about the school. One parent summed up the views of many when they said, 'Branston Junior Academy is a fantastic school for all children, with an amazing team of staff who care deeply about the education and welfare of the children they teach.'

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and ambitious. Subject leaders have planned the school's curriculum well. They have considered the fundamental building blocks of knowledge that pupils must know. They have also identified the subject-specific skills they want pupils to be able to use and apply. Pupils are benefiting from this approach. They gain a broad base of knowledge across the subjects that make up the school's curriculum.

Teachers present information to pupils well. They ensure that pupils are not overloaded with the content they teach. This helps pupils know and do more. In science, pupils are able to talk confidently about the circulatory system. In English, pupils use their vocabulary and understanding of persuasive texts to write letters to the prime minister. In computing, pupils use their understanding of web crawlers to explain how a search engine might rank a result through an algorithm. On occasion, teachers do not always use activities that are precisely matched to the intended learning. When this happens, some pupils do not attain the depth of understanding that is set out in the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full curriculum. Teachers and support staff help pupils with SEND to achieve. Effective adaptations to the curriculum and small-scale interventions, such as 'rapid reading and writing', help pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils at the earlier stages of reading receive some effective phonics teaching. The books they read are well matched to the phonics they know. This helps them become better readers. However, the approach to teaching phonics is not as precise as it could be. Adults do not always encourage pupils to use pure sounds when they decode unfamiliar words.

Older pupils develop a love for reading. Class reading is a staple part of a pupil's education. Pupils have most recently enjoyed reading 'Holes' and 'The Boy at the Back of the Class'. Teachers rotate class books, which exposes pupils to different genres and styles. Pupils enjoy reading and develop a love for it.

Pupils get on well with each other. They commit to their study and show positive attitudes to learning. Leaders have created a culture in which poor behaviour is not acceptable. As a result, pupils can learn.

The curriculum goes beyond the academic. Pupils benefit from the number of clubs they can attend. For example, pupils at lunchtime helped landscape some of the outdoor grounds in the well-attended gardening club. Other pupils enjoy the sports clubs on offer. Pupils look forward to 'Wow days'. These days help to bring the curriculum to life. Pupils are looking forward to a visit to Twycross Zoo.

Staff are proud to work at this school. Staff feel that leaders consider their workload and well-being. Many staff are of the opinion that this is a school that continues to get better and better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have trained all staff how to be effective in spotting the signs that a pupil might be unsafe. Staff are vigilant. They know how to record and report a concern about a pupil. Staff know that reporting the smallest change in behaviour could help build a better picture for the safeguarding leader.

Leaders work swiftly and effectively to help and manage those who are at risk. They engage and work closely with external services to ensure that the most vulnerable get the help they need. Records of concerns and details of actions are robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, some teachers do not use teaching activities and/or resources that match closely enough to the intended learning. This leads to some pupils not developing the depth of understanding that is set out in the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently use the most effective activities and resources to teach the curriculum.
- Support staff who teach reading are not yet early reading experts. The strategies to support pupils at the early stages of reading are not as precise as they could be. Leaders should ensure that all staff who teach early reading receive training to become early reading experts.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2013.

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	138486
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10227855
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	168
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Pursey
Headteacher	Rachael Shaw
Website	www.branston-junior.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision to educate pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils in key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult. The inspector looked at plans and pupils' books and spoke to children about other subjects.
- The inspector met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils from key stage 2.

- The inspector met with the safeguarding leaders to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspector met with the chair of the trust and some trustees.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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