

Brenzett Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118703
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	379665
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	John Mason

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Flack
Headteacher	Matthew Easton
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed and all teachers were seen at least once. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school tracking data, a sample of pupils' work in books, the school's monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body, reports prepared by the local authority and a range of documents relating to the care and safety of pupils. The 37 questionnaires returned by parents and/or carers also helped to inform inspection judgements.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The current attainment and rates of pupils' progress, with a particular focus on writing, mathematics and the progress of girls.
- The impact of staff turbulence on the provision for, and quality of, pupils' learning.
- The extent to which the assessment of pupils' progress is informing the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- The extent to which pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.

Information about the school

Brenzett Church of England Primary School is smaller than most primary schools and draws pupils from an extensive rural area around the village of Brenzett. Most pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of children receiving additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen since the previous inspection, but is still below average. In almost each year, there are more boys than girls. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school during their primary education. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught together with the youngest Year 1 pupils.

The school runs its own breakfast club and a private provider runs a daily after-school club on the premises, which is inspected separately. The school holds the Enhanced Extended School Award. Over the last 30 months, there has been considerable change to the teaching staff. The school subscribes to local authority support to raise attainment.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Brenzett Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education. Pupils enjoy school, are happy in their learning and get on very well with one another. They feel safe in the knowledge that adults know them well and listen to them, supporting them if they have any concerns. They are keen to take action to improve their health and participate regularly in activities which help them to do so. Attendance is above average and there is a high degree of parental satisfaction with all aspects of the school.

Changes in teaching staff have led to some variability in the quality of pupils' learning during recent years. This difficult situation has been well managed, particularly by the headteacher, and the school has identified accurate priorities for improvement. The staff are now well focused on, and committed to, improving outcomes for pupils, embracing well the support of the local authority in this process. Pupils' progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 is good, but in Key Stage 2, pupils are making up ground they have lost through the staffing turbulence and their progress is satisfactory. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are appropriately met and these pupils also make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average. In reading and science it is average, but it is lower in writing and mathematics. The school has suitably adapted the curriculum in order to address these weaknesses and now has regular dedicated sessions to accelerate pupils' progress in handwriting, spelling and mental mathematics. As a result, presentation of work has improved and pupils' pride in their achievements is growing, helping them to progress more steadily in these areas. Pupils are catching up more quickly in writing than in mathematics, where their skills in mental calculation are still variable and they lack confidence in solving problems, particularly word problems. In writing, many pupils do not confidently grasp the links between the phonic structure of words and their spellings and only now are they beginning to have enough opportunity to produce extended independent writing across a wide range of themes and genres to aspire to higher standards in tests. Boys, in particular, lack the fluency and accuracy in their handwriting to work at pace. Concern from 2011 data that girls may not be making as much progress as boys was not borne out by inspection evidence.

Teachers create a good atmosphere for learning, with lively displays, varied activities, warm relationships with pupils and good direction of teaching assistants. Targets for improvement are mostly shared well with pupils, so that they can

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articulate how to improve. However, success criteria for tasks in class are not always clear, inhibiting pupils' ability to assess how well they have done. The more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is beginning to be used effectively by teachers to plan lessons which better meet the different ability of pupils. However, tasks are not always finely enough matched to the age and ability of individual pupils, slowing the pace of learning.

Careful monitoring of the quality of teaching, mainly by the headteacher and local authority staff, is helping bring greater consistency to teaching across the school, addressing any weaknesses and ensuring teaching is satisfactory overall, but improving. Several subject leaders are new in post and they, along with many new governors, have not had sufficient training and time in their roles to hold staff rigorously to account for raising standards in literacy and numeracy. This notwithstanding, the school's self-evaluation procedures are effective, and staff and governors share an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses, which are appropriately addressed in school development plans. As a result, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils develop better skills in mental calculation
 - developing more effective approaches to problem solving and to word problems.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - developing greater fluency and accuracy in handwriting
 - helping pupils to better understand the links between the phonic structure of words and their spellings
 - developing extended writing across a wider range of themes and genres.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that success criteria in all tasks are always clear and easily assessable for pupils
 - matching tasks to age and ability more accurately.
- Ensure that governors and subject leaders have the training needed to hold staff more robustly to account for raising standards in literacy and numeracy in particular.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most children enter the school with skills below age-related expectations. However, in recent years, they have entered Year 1 broadly average for their age. By the end

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of Key Stage 1, assessments in reading, writing and mathematics have indicated average or slightly higher attainment, with little variation between the subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is broadly average overall. In reading and science it is average, but it is below average in mathematics and writing. In mathematics, pupils are able to identify modes, ranges, means and other technical terms securely. However, higher attaining pupils in particular are over-reliant on working out calculations on paper which they can, when prompted, easily work out in their heads. In English, the quality of spelling and handwriting is erratic, although improving. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, are held back because they have not had enough practice in writing structured prose independently in a wide range of styles and genres. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress comparable to that of the other pupils.

Pupils feel very safe, because they are confident that adults will address any concerns they have. They take careful account of risk, for example in designing their own sports day or in keeping a watchful eye on one another at play. They show their commitment to keeping healthy by growing their own vegetables or engaging in exercise and the many sporting activities of the school. They value the quiet areas allocated to them at play, respecting one another’s emotional health, too. Pupils are helpful and respectful and most pay attention well in class. As a result, learning proceeds appropriately. However, not all pupils have developed a securely independent approach to learning by setting standards for themselves without the prompting of teachers. Pupils’ social skills develop well and they involve themselves willingly in the actions of the school council, such as charitable concern for the local homeless or in corresponding with a school in Uganda. Their spiritual awareness is good and they respond well to the Christian message which underpins assemblies. However, they are less well informed about other faiths and the wider diversity of British society. They enjoy being enterprising, such as by promoting their Christmas and summer fayres in the community, but their preparation for their future work and learning is satisfactory because their basic skills in English and mathematics are not better.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The significant proportion of teachers new to the school in recent years have received good support and there is growing consistency in teaching across the school. Teaching which does not engage pupils in their learning is now very rare and increasingly teachers elicit good learning from all pupils by involving them in self- and peer-assessment and challenging them to discuss their targets. Teachers have recently embraced a system of regular assessment of all pupils in English and mathematics. This helps them identify more promptly when pupils are falling behind and to address any individual shortcoming by adapting their teaching to suit. Marking is improving, with some teachers making very helpful comments to ensure pupils understand the next steps in their learning. However, this practice is better in English than in mathematics and sometimes there is not enough opportunity for pupils to respond to these comments.

The curriculum has been appropriately adjusted to enable all pupils to focus regularly on the key skills of English and mathematics to raise their standards. Good personal, social and health education supports the moral values pupils embrace through assemblies and their involvement with the local church to underpin some good personal development. Pupils have good opportunities to learn musical instruments and their joyous communal singing benefits from their participation in the national Sing Up scheme. Pupils enjoy the good range of clubs and visits available to them and respond with interest when organisations from the local community, such as the police or fire fighters, visit the school. Although dance, science and information and communication technology make some good links with English and mathematics, a wider range of contexts for extended writing is only now beginning to emerge.

Pastoral care for pupils has many strengths, but is overall satisfactory because it does not focus enough on supporting good learning. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. They integrate well and have the respect of other pupils, learning and progressing in line with others. Links with other schools and nursery settings are good, helping pupils to settle quickly, including those who change school other than at the usual times. Good pastoral links are made with families and this has had a significant impact on raising attendance. The lively and well-supervised breakfast club also plays an important part in establishing good routines for learning. While good pastoral support for families has warranted the school's Enhanced Extended School Award, and good channels of communication with home are in place, the school recognises that work

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still needs to be done to involve parents more in pupils’ learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has galvanised his many new staff well to embed ambition and to embrace initiatives to drive up pupils’ attainment. Staff respond well to the input of the local authority and other partners, such as the local secondary school, in this endeavour and are moving towards more consistent provision across the school. Subject leaders, many newly in role, have built a picture of their subject from work monitoring and other strategies, but as yet they have had only limited opportunity to observe their colleagues teach and develop strategies to improve classroom practice. The governors have managed the reduction of the budget deficit well, but currently there are many governors new to post. While many bring important skills to the governing body, they have not undertaken enough essential training to fully challenge and hold the school to account for the progress of its pupils. Although there is much good awareness of safety issues, the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is satisfactory because governors need to be more rigorous about ensuring review dates are stated more clearly in policies. The views of parents’ and carers are regularly sought through formal and informal ways. They feel well informed about their children’s well-being and progress. This is a particular strength for younger children. The school collaborates with external partners very well, particularly in respect of pupils’ care, but many initiatives to raise standards are at an early stage of implementation and are only just beginning to have an impact on outcomes for the pupils. The school has a clear equal opportunities policy and satisfactorily tackles discrimination through initiatives within the curriculum and in assemblies. It understands the religious, ethnic and social-economic context of its pupils clearly and evaluates the impact of its initiatives to widen pupils’ horizons, but has not developed a coherent action plan to promote wider commitment to community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	3

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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The profile of children’s skills when they join has been improving, due to the close liaison with families and other settings in the vicinity. In all areas of learning, children make good progress and in recent years they have entered Year 1 with above age-related skills. The well equipped learning environment enables children to choose freely between indoor and outdoor activities. Staff are well trained and guide play towards learning effectively, such as turning ‘football’ with outdoor dice into number recognition exercises. They also make careful notes on what children can do, contributing to well kept profiles of children’s development and the early identification of any concerns. Home-school contact books are well used to involve parents and carers in their children’s learning. The balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning is good, helping pupils to make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. Children learn to take risks and to be aware of safe practice, for example when cutting materials with scissors or using scooters outdoors. They also mix very well with the older children in Year 1, and make good progress in their personal development. The provision is well led and managed and the combined teaching with Year 1 children mostly works well, with activities suitably matched to meet the needs of both groups of children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents returned questionnaires. All 37 returns indicated overwhelmingly that children enjoy school, feel safe and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. All parents and carers feel well informed about their children's progress, that the school helps them to support their children's learning and that teaching is good. They are very pleased with the way the school is led and managed. The response to other questions was also very positive, being well above average.

Inspectors recognise that the school does much to engage parents and carers, but do not hold such strongly positive views, because the pupils' attainment is only broadly average. Inspectors agree with the school's view that teaching has to be improved before good outcomes can be achieved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brenzett Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 113 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	81	7	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	78	8	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	38	22	59	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	41	20	54	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	49	19	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	15	41	22	59	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	51	18	49	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	49	16	43	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	41	21	57	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	30	22	59	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	27	24	65	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	46	19	51	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	22	59	15	41	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

11 November 2011

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Brenzett Church of England Primary School, Romney Marsh
TN29 9NU**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when the inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you very much and the information you gave us, including from your questionnaires, was very helpful. Please also thank your parents and/or carers for returning the questionnaires.

We agreed with Mr Easton that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. Many of you told us that it was better, because you enjoy school a lot, make friends well and feel safe. You also told us that you like to take responsibility around the school, including in activities which help you stay healthy, and help others through your charitable work. We agree that these are good, but are concerned that the good progress you make in the Reception class and in Key Stage 1 is not maintained in Key Stage 2. This is partly because you have had lots of changes of teachers in recent years and new teachers have had to get used to the school. However, in mathematics and writing, pupils in Key Stage 2 should be progressing more rapidly. In order to get you all on track, we have asked your teachers to do the following.

- Help you to do mental calculations with greater pace and accuracy.
- Help you to solve mathematical problems, particularly word problems, better.
- Ensure that you all develop the skills to write fluently and accurately.
- Make sure that you links sounds and spellings better.
- Provide more opportunity to write at length by yourselves on a wide range of topics.

I am sure you can all think of ways you can contribute to these points, even without the help of your teachers. See what you can do!

We have also asked teachers to make sure you all quickly understand what you have to do when they set you tasks and to make sure that you know what constitutes good work, so that you learn more quickly. We have asked the governors and subject leaders, too, to focus more on raising the standards of your work in literacy and numeracy.

Yours sincerely

John Mason
Lead inspector

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