

Brinkley Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131219
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	381317
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Joy Considine

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Jack
Headteacher	Lorraine Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joy Considine	Additional Inspector
Diana Songer-Hudgell	Additional Inspector
David Gutmann	Additional Inspector
Stuart Gray	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 24 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 15 teachers and they held discussions with school leaders, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Additionally, inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their enjoyment of books. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school development plans, pupils' assessment and tracking information, minutes from meetings of the governing body and other documentation, including that regarding safeguarding pupils. They analysed the responses to questionnaires from 118 parents and carers as well as those received from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Most pupils are White British and an average number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher joined the school in September 2010 and there have been some other significant changes to the staff team since the previous inspection.

Care for pupils is provided at the start and the end of the school day in 'The Grove' which formed part of this inspection. There is a pre-school on site which is not managed by the governing body and, so, is subject to separate inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Brinkley Grove is a good school where pupils achieve well both academically and personally. One parent who responded to the survey reflected the views of many by writing, 'We believe Brinkley Grove provides a very good education for our children.' The school is not yet outstanding because, occasionally, teachers do not provide lessons that fully extend and challenge all pupils in developing their mathematical and writing skills. Progress in writing and mathematics is, therefore, sometimes slower than that in reading.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Most pupils make good progress and attain average standards in writing and mathematics. Their attainment in reading is above average. Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make good progress owing to the good support from skilled teaching assistants.
- Teaching is good overall. Teaching is usually lively and enthusiastic and this engages the interest of pupils. Teachers provide an imaginative curriculum offering pupils a broad range of experiences that enrich their learning. The quality of teaching in art is a strength of the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they behave well in lessons and around the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Their attendance has improved and is above average. The school provides high quality support for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- School leaders have established an ambitious vision for the school in which there are high expectations for staff and pupils. Robust systems for self-evaluation provide an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and give leaders a clear understanding of what more needs to be done. Systems for the management of teaching and performance of staff have led to good teaching.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in writing and mathematics by April 2013 through
 - ensuring that the curriculum for mathematics and writing develops sequentially so that pupils build their skills systematically and progressively
 - ensuring that all teachers make sharper use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils
 - providing all pupils with the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking, and to correct and improve their work
 - ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to record their work independently by reducing the number of photocopied resource sheets.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter school with skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in literacy and emotional development. Most pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 6, their attainment in writing and mathematics is average and in reading, it is above average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in their development of writing and mathematical skills. They count accurately to 10 and most can use numbers to carry out simple addition and subtraction. Children demonstrated their skills by matching and blending letters and sounds to construct simple words and sentences. Most children get on well together and they share and take turns.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they have support from skilled teaching assistants to help them to learn. In one lesson, a teaching assistant helped a pupil to work out 4×12 by adding together 4 groups of 12 and this helped him to understand the relationship between multiplication tables and repeated addition.

Pupils across the school enjoy reading and are keen to share and talk about their books. By the end of Year 2, their attainment in reading is just above average. Pupils read for pleasure and for information and they confidently discuss their preferences. They often use their reading skills when learning other subjects. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson, pupils were required to read and interpret information to solve mathematical problems based on designing new playground facilities.

Writing and mathematics have not improved at the same rate. Although most pupils have developed average skills in both writing and mathematics, work is occasionally not well matched to their learning needs. This is because a few teachers follow a rigidly prescribed curriculum so that work does not always match the individual

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learning needs of pupils. Additionally, the over-use of photocopied resource sheets limits pupils' opportunities to record their work independently and to develop good handwriting and presentation skills.

Inspectors agreed with the views of the large majority of parents and carers who believe that their children achieve well.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have high expectations and in lessons, pupils are keen to respond to teachers' questioning, particularly when they are challenged. Most teachers plan lessons that are relevant and purposeful so that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Many teachers plan practical learning experiences linked to the current class topic. In one lesson, in which the theme was 'The Seaside,' pupils designed a poster to encourage tourists to visit the local beach. This effectively promoted their literacy, artistic and geographical skills. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Skilled teaching assistants provide support to ensure that those who find learning more difficult or whose needs are complex enjoy their learning and achieve well.

Teaching is typically lively and enthusiastic and appeals to the interests of pupils. Most teachers use questioning well to explore pupils' understanding and to develop their learning and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers provide a wide range of reading activities that are matched well to the capabilities and interests of pupils and this contributes to their above average standards in reading.

The promotion of speaking and listening is a strong feature in most lessons, as there are many occasions when pupils can turn to their 'talk partners' to share their thinking and develop their confidence. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher asked pupils to explain how they were able to calculate the perimeter of irregular shapes with some 'missing' measurements. A group of very enthusiastic girls were delighted to respond with the correct solution.

Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in using assessment in lessons to develop pupils' understanding and to adjust their lessons accordingly. However, a small minority do not use assessment information accurately enough to plan lessons that meet pupils' learning needs. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly but although they provide detailed comments on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to correct their work and develop their learning.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to the outdoor area where they can practise and develop their physical skills. There is a good emphasis on developing children's reading skills through the use of a structured programme of teaching letters and sounds (phonics) and this enables them to make good progress. Their progress in writing and mathematics is slower because assessment information

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is not always used well enough to help them to develop their skills systematically. Occasionally a few adults are over prescriptive when planning activities and some children do not always have enough opportunities to make choices for themselves.

Parents and carers agree that teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. One parent wrote, 'My children look forward to every new day at school and most days come home with big smiles on their faces.'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are friendly and polite and they get on well together. They behave well in and around the school, and they say that most pupils behave well and that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. They show respect towards those from different backgrounds and they appreciate the opportunities to learn about other cultures. The inspection endorsed the views of the large majority of parents and carers who believe that behaviour is usually good and that their children are safe in school. One parent wrote, 'My child thoroughly enjoys school and has never been reluctant to attend. She responds well to teachers and has made secure friendships.' Staff have established consistent procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and consequently pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school and understand the need to keep themselves safe. They know about the dangers associated with substance abuse such as tobacco as well as the dangers associated with roads, railways and water. They say there is no bullying and that adults are on hand to sort out minor disagreements that arise occasionally. They have a secure understanding of different types of bullying especially cyber-bullying and that relating to prejudice. For the very few who find difficulty in conforming to the school's high expectations, the school makes good use of external agencies such as behaviour support services. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of exclusions, with very few in recent years. 'The Grove' provides good quality care for pupils at the end of the school day and a nutritious breakfast gets them off to a good start at the beginning of the day.

Leadership and management

The success of the school is due to the strong educational direction provided by school leaders. They are ambitious and hold high aspirations for staff and pupils. They have established an effective programme to monitor and improve the quality of teaching so that most is consistently good. There is a planned programme of professional development including peer observation and external training courses linked to realising the aims of school improvement planning. All staff have performance management objectives that focus on raising pupils' achievement and they are all accountable for pupils' progress. There has been good improvement in pupils' achievement and attendance since the previous inspection, confirming the school's capacity to improve further.

All the staff and members of the governing body are involved in evaluating the

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school's strengths and setting new priorities for development. These are closely monitored by school leaders to ensure that actions are having a beneficial impact on pupils' achievement. Actions to improve the teaching of mathematics have recently been introduced and these are improving pupils' motivation and enjoyment of the subject as they use a variety of mathematical skills to solve problems. New initiatives to improve writing have led to some improvement in pupils' spelling and punctuation but this has not been as rapid as that in mathematics.

The curriculum provides rich and memorable experiences to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils spoke excitedly about the work they are doing around the Olympic theme and Year 6 pupils are looking forward to their end of year production. The curriculum is mainly well planned with increasing occasions when pupils use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills when learning other subjects. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn a foreign language and there are some examples of high quality artwork produced by pupils across the school.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's work. Members receive high quality information about the school which they use to monitor and challenge school leaders. They ensure that procedures for safeguarding are robust so that pupils are safe in school. The school values diversity and discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated, reflecting the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. This is demonstrated in the rapidly closing gaps in the achievement of boys and girls.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brinkley Grove Primary School, Colchester, CO4 9GF

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all and listening to what you had to say about your school. You told us that you enjoy school and that adults and children are friendly and helpful. You said that you enjoy your lessons and that most teachers make lessons fun. You said that you feel safe in school because midday assistants look after you in the playground at lunchtimes.

We found your school to be good. Most of you make good progress and you enjoy learning. We agreed with you that adults care for you and keep you safe. While you make good progress, we found that some of you could be doing even better with your writing and mathematics and this is what we have asked your school leaders to do to make your school even better:

- use assessment information to plan lessons that are matched more closely to your learning needs
- make sure that you are given opportunities to develop your writing and mathematical skills progressively and sequentially
- ensure that teachers always provide you with opportunities to correct and improve your work when they have marked it
- provide you with more opportunities to record your work independently so that you develop good handwriting and presentation skills.

I am sure you will all do what you can to help your school leaders and teachers. You can do this by asking for harder work and by asking them if you can correct your work before the next lesson.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Lead inspector

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