

Brightlingsea Junior School

Eastern Road, Brightlingsea, Colchester, CO7 0HU

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There have been recent improvements in standards and progress so that attainment is now broadly average, but there is further to go before these represent good achievement.
- Pupils do not always know their learning targets or the next steps they need to take to move their learning on.
- Whilst teaching is improving, not enough is yet good or outstanding.
- Teachers do not always make sure that work is challenging or that pupils have enough opportunities to work by themselves or with other pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how well they are doing or how they can improve their work. Marking is not as good in mathematics as it is in English.
- While there is some good training to improve teaching, the school does not make enough use of its good teaching to help other teachers improve their teaching skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and enjoy school.
- They enjoy learning and are keen to do well.
- Pupils feel safe. They say bullying is rare and that when it does happen it is dealt with well.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. Leaders and governors work well together. They know what the school must do to improve and have taken action that has started to lead to improved progress and standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 teachers in 23 lessons or parts of lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also spoke to parents bringing their children to school.
- Inspectors examined documents about the school's work, including information about the achievement of pupils, development planning and the school's self-evaluation.
- They took account of the 20 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, and the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views. They considered the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Watson	Additional Inspector
Judith Payne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most junior schools.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average and none are in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A small number of pupils have a combination of physical and learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for children looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently experienced change in leadership of the governing body and the temporary absence of the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to at least good by making sure that:
 - work in all lessons is always challenging and is matched to the abilities of all pupils
 - pupils spend most of the time in lessons on their own learning activities or learning with other pupils
 - marking, especially in mathematics, reflects the best seen in telling pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve the progress they make
 - pupils know their targets and the next steps they need to take to move their learning on
 - effective teaching skills already in the school are systematically shared with all teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards have drifted downwards since the last inspection and were below average in 2011 and 2012. This decline has been reversed so that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is broadly average overall. The improvement is best in reading and writing, where standards are close to average. In mathematics, standards are below average, and improvement is slower because the school focused its efforts first on improving pupils' performance in reading and writing.
- Pupils join Year 3 with broadly average attainment. Their progress requires improvement, although it is better than in recent years, when pupils have underachieved. It is improving rapidly in reading and writing, and more slowly in mathematics. Progress within individual years is fast, so overall pupils are catching up on past underperformance.
- Most pupils express their ideas and understanding well in writing. They mostly punctuate their work accurately, use a wide vocabulary, spell correctly and link ideas together well to form complex sentences.
- Pupils read widely, and most enjoy reading. A small proportion of pupils find reading difficult but they know how to link sounds and letters together to help them recognise unfamiliar words, and work with determination to do so.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are below average, but are slowly improving as pupils practise basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division skills on a daily basis. They are learning to apply calculation skills competently to day-to-day mathematical problems and this is having a positive effect on accelerating their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. Some make good progress, because they receive skilled support to help them gain confidence to work independently and with other pupils, and to deal with their complex learning difficulties.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make good progress. In the current Year 6, these pupils are less than one term behind their classmates in reading and writing and close to the performance of other pupils in mathematics. This represents a small narrowing of the gap from 2012. Their progress is good because funds are spent effectively on individual support for pupils, books to encourage them to read, and on making sure that they have the same range of opportunities and experiences as other pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers' marking is inconsistent. The best marking tells pupils how well they are doing and how to improve their work. When the advice is given pupils almost always follow it. However, guidance on how to improve is sometimes not provided, so pupils' work does not improve quickly enough.
- Marking of pupils' work in mathematics has improved since the previous inspection, and in some years it is extremely good. This is not true for all years though, and it is sometimes not as detailed as the marking of written work.

- Teachers do not always make sure pupils know what their targets are, so that they know the next steps in learning. Those pupils who know their targets say they like having something to work towards, and that it helps them learn better.
- In a small proportion of lessons, work is not challenging enough. In these lessons, teachers do not give pupils enough time to work by themselves or with other pupils, so they do not develop new skills and understanding well enough.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' performance is accurate, and in most lessons it is used well to provide challenging work to meet the needs of pupils and, where necessary, to extend the learning of able pupils and to support the learning of slower learners.
- In most lessons, teachers provide a good range of learning activities that catch pupils' interests and help them learn well. In these lessons, teachers' questioning of pupils, and encouragement of them to explain their understanding and knowledge, is often good. Their questioning is often directed towards individual pupils to help them to understand where they have difficulty, to extend their understanding where they are particularly able.
- Teachers usually make sure that pupils develop confidence in their learning by giving them opportunities to work together, to share their ideas, to question each other and to agree over what they learn. This not only promotes their confidence, but also the effective development of good social and moral values.
- Learning assistants work well with teachers in planning pupils' work and in supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to gain confidence in their own skills. They make sure that these pupils work with other pupils to improve their social skills and to learn to collaborate with others.
- Learning assistants also work well with able pupils. They prompt and question them and make sure that they are suitably challenged in their work.
- There are effective links between subjects, in particular to help promote pupils' reading and writing. Recent work to promote better progress in mathematics, especially in encouraging pupils to explain the mathematical processes they carry out, is helping to improve standards in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school. They speak with enthusiasm about the activities the school organises and about most of their lessons.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons. Pupils also behave well around the school grounds. Although they run about a great deal, they take care to avoid collision with other pupils.
- Pupils behave sensibly and maturely, with great consideration for other pupils. For example, they help the small number of pupils with physical disabilities and make sure that they are fully involved in small-group work and help them move round school.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good.
- Pupils have a very good understanding about the different forms of bullying. They say bullying is

rare and that none has happened recently. They would go to any adult for help if they were worried about anything.

- Pupils' attendance is above average and rising. The school works closely with families to make sure that pupils attend regularly.
- On the few occasions that pupils do not pay attention in lessons, it is because they are not challenged or because they are not learning independently or with other pupils. However, they rarely interrupt the learning of other pupils, and other pupils say that if they do, the teachers stop them.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and other leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have introduced effective actions to help to raise standards and improve pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing, and more recently in mathematics. This has halted the decline in standards and progress made by pupils, and successfully introduced improvements throughout the school.
- Teachers have targets to help them to improve their work. These are linked to the school's targets for pupils' progress, to teachers' professional development and the school's priorities for improvement.
- The local authority provides good support for the school. In particular, it has helped staff to assess pupils' progress accurately.
- The school aims to improve its teaching to at least good. To do this it makes sure teachers go to training courses or visit other schools to help improve their teaching skills. While it uses the skills of its own good and outstanding teachers occasionally, it does not take the opportunity to use them as often as it should to share the school's own teaching expertise to improve teachers' skills.
- The school organises its curriculum well. It promotes pupils' English and mathematics skills well in all subjects and, through using the International Primary Curriculum, makes sure that pupils learn about the traditions, cultures and beliefs of other countries.
- Pupils' experience is enriched by trips and visitors, and a wide range of clubs and out-of-school activities. For example, pupils play hockey, tag-rugby, football and netball and take part in singing, drama and music activities. Along with assemblies, these contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school provides good care for its pupils. It liaises closely with external services to support families, especially those with children who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the school. Despite the small number of responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and the school's own surveys, the school has good systems to communicate with parents through after-school activities, newsletters, texts, and talking to parents at parent consultation evenings. The school provides activities to support parents and carers in understanding how their children learn, and these are well supported.
- The school is demonstrating it has the capacity to improve further. Although there is room for further improvement, standards are rising and pupils' progress is accelerating. The school's

efforts to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well means there is little difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Teaching is improving and attendance levels are rising.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well informed and recent training helps governors to ask challenging questions to support the school in its improvement. Governors are knowledgeable about how well the school's pupils perform in relation to those in other schools nationally. They know how well different groups perform in comparison with each other. They plan expenditure carefully, and check to make sure that funds are spent wisely to promote pupils' achievement. In the case of pupil premium funded pupils, governors know that the progress of these pupils has benefitted from the funds spent to support them and that their levels of attainment are close to those of other pupils.
- Governors know that teachers must meet targets associated with pupils' progress, the school main areas for improvement and their own professional development before they can advance on the teachers' salary scales. They make sure the school is safe, that it fully meets safeguarding requirements and that leaders check the suitability of staff to work in the school.
- Governors take an active part in encouraging pupils' progress and attitudes to school. They award prizes regularly to pupils for their progress, their attitudes to learning and to how well they help other pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114758
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	411826

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Johnstone
Headteacher	Claire Claydon
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2010
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