

Briscoe Primary and Nursery School

Felmores End, Pitsea, Essex, SS13 1PN

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the school opened its leaders, including governors and trustees, have taken decisive action to raise pupils' achievement. As a result, teaching has improved strongly and progress has accelerated in all year groups.
- Effective partnership work across the academy schools helps leaders to have an accurate understanding of the main strengths and improvement priorities for the school.
- Children make rapid progress in an exciting and stimulating Early Years Foundation Stage. All adults contribute strongly to children's development of basic skills.
- Pupils behave well and say that the school helps them to keep safe. The large majority of parents agree, and feel that the school is warm and welcoming.
- Leaders have forged strong partnerships with parents, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. As a result, attendance has improved from below to above average in one year.
- Leaders also use their skills to make a significant contribution to improvements in other schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils, particularly those who join the school late and boys, do not make progress as rapidly as others.
- Sometimes teachers plan activities which do not take sufficient account of pupils' interests to fire their enthusiasm.
- Teachers do not make full use of resources to promote boys' engagement in learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited nine lessons. Seven observations were shared with different members of the leadership team. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at work from each year group, much of this with members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at information on individual pupils' progress, anonymised records of teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body and by the trustees of the academy.
- Inspectors met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body, trustees and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 57 responses to the online Parent View survey. Written comments from 31 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lisa Fraser

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Briscoe Primary and Nursery School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school opened as an academy on 1 September 2012, sponsored by the Hearts Academy Trust. It shares a governing body with its partner school, The Wickford Church of England School.
- The school shares the site with The Orchard Pre-school, which opened in September 2013. This is inspected separately.
- The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education. In this role, she supports other local schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average. Few of these speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than average join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- The school runs a small group, called The Sunflower Cottage, which supports pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This is used by other local schools as well.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the school opened there have been significant changes in staff, including the appointment of a head of school in October 2012, alongside two assistant headteachers. The school was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in February 2013, and visited by the Department for Education and HMI in January 2014. The front entrance to the school is currently under reconstruction.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement, particularly for boys and those who join partway through their primary school education, by:
 - making sure that teachers take full account of pupils' interests when planning activities
 - using resources that promote engagement, so that pupils learn more quickly

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress is accelerating, and standards are rising. School data show that this year, pupils in Years 2 and 6 attained at the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from low starting points.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have skills well below those typical for their age when they join. They make rapid progress and the proportion achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year in 2014 was higher than normally found. Children thrive in a warm and welcoming environment and they have many opportunities to develop their skills. Their progress is tracked very carefully so any gaps in learning are quickly closed.
- Pupils attained around the national average in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check in 2014. This represents rapid gains in skills since joining Year 1.
- Work in books confirms that pupils are making rapid progress. For example, Year 6 pupils' written work shows an increasing ability to write using different styles and for different purposes.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium are making accelerated progress. Although at the end of Year 6 in 2013 the gap in attainment compared to their peers was over a year in reading, 18 months in writing and four months in mathematics, these gaps are now closing. In some year groups, these pupils are making even faster progress than their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Good support is provided for them, along with other pupils who have additional needs, so that their needs are expertly met. Many have additional one-to-one support and achieve well.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak little English on arrival, also achieve well. Their particular learning needs are quickly assessed and successfully met.
- In 2013, attainment in Year 6 was below average overall. It was broadly average in writing, but in reading and mathematics pupils left the school on average more than a year behind pupils nationally. Some pupils who joined the school late were not able to catch up with their peers in the shorter time they were at the school.
- The school recognises that boys and pupils who join the school partway through their primary school education sometimes fall behind their peers, especially in reading and writing. Their gaps in learning are now closing as their needs are assessed early and work is planned more effectively so they catch up quickly.
- More-able pupils achieve well. Work is planned with sufficient challenge and interest so that these pupils are able to reach higher levels.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is improving quickly, and in some year groups it is outstanding. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, children make exceptional progress because opportunity is taken to build on their skills, and learning is lively and fun. A vibrant and stimulating environment helps children to develop their curiosity, and thoughtfully planned activities 'build their learning power', as the children chant.

- Teachers check carefully in lessons, to make sure work is at the right level of difficulty. Pupils learn from each other and check their own work.
- Reading is taught daily, so pupils can practise their phonic skills. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to read, talk about what the text means and make predictions. As a result, pupils read with confidence and expression, and use many ways of finding out about unfamiliar words or phrases.
- Calculation skills are taught effectively. Pupils benefit from regular chances to practise these skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 made quick gains in adding up columns of numbers and partitioning to help them produce shop labels for toys with different prices. Effective questioning and good examples helped the pupils successfully apply these skills.
- The school places increasing value on children learning outdoors. Teachers make the most of the extensive grounds, including the forested area, to promote a wide range of skills. Year 1 pupils, for example, constructed their own birds' nests as they learnt about different habitats. Effective questioning and guidance helped all pupils to use their imagination and teamwork skills to produce thoughtful nests.
- Additional adults play a strong role in supporting pupils in class. They offer expert help so that pupils can see what they do well and what they need to improve. They also provide effective support on a one-to-one basis and in small groups.
- Teachers provide regular and helpful feedback to pupils. Marking helps pupils know what they need to do next in their learning. Written comments are detailed and help pupils correct any mistakes. This is consistent throughout the school.
- Although the subjects and topics are planned to provide interesting contexts for learning, teachers do not always plan lesson activities that build well on the pupils' interests and fire their enthusiasm. The resources teachers use do not always promote pupils' engagement, particularly that of boys.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school, pupils behave sensibly and show care and consideration towards each other. They have positive attitudes to learning, and this is reflected in the care they show in the presentation of their work and the respect they show for displays around the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils learn about personal safety at every opportunity, such as when they are encouraged to take appropriate risks during outdoor learning. They also learn about how to keep safe when parts of the building are under construction.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and its different forms, especially racism and cyber-bullying. There are now few incidents of any note and exclusions have been reduced significantly. Pupils say that 'bullying is not an issue'. Although one said they would like to learn about how to better deal with bullying themselves, they are confident that staff will deal effectively with any incidents that may arise.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well supported, and they appreciate the nurture and care provided in the Sunflower Cottage. They learn how to consider the feelings of

others with the help of the school dog Sid, and many eagerly follow his 'blog'! Pupils are helped to develop trust and consideration for the feelings of others by working with Sid. The breakfast club also offers a safe and secure start to the day for those who attend.

- The school has worked extremely effectively with families to encourage better attendance. As a result, attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders have responded positively to external reviews of the school's performance by taking decisive and highly effective action to raise standards. As a result, teaching has improved strongly, progress has accelerated across the school, and attendance has improved dramatically.
- The executive headteacher provides leadership support for schools in difficulty. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader also provides support for other schools. Strong partnerships within the trust and with other local schools are helping to raise the school's ambitions. Leaders, including governors and trustees, have a strong drive to improve the school even further.
- Teachers and other staff benefit from a thorough approach to checking and improving their performance. All staff have regular training opportunities. As a result, all teachers willingly take on additional responsibilities and staff morale is high. One reflected the views of the others in explaining, 'The key focus is always the well-being of the pupils. All staff understand that the key to progress is to ensure that pupils feel safe, secure, respected and happy. All staff, from the cleaner to the executive headteacher, work towards providing this.'
- The curriculum places significant emphasis on topics which build on the pupils' interests and ideas. Much of the learning takes place outdoors; for example, in the Forest School. Pupils are encouraged to develop their curiosity and develop teamwork skills. This focus is helping boys to catch up with the girls in their learning.
- The curriculum is well supported by a wide range of after-school clubs, visits and residential trips. A strong commitment to the school's values, 'hearts' (happiness, esteem, achievement, respect and responsibility, truth and spirituality) helps the school to be a cohesive and happy community. Links to local places of worship and other cultural activities make a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes effective use of the primary school sports fund. More pupils now take part in sports and after-school clubs, and teachers are better trained to teach different types of sports such as gymnastics.
- The school makes excellent use of the pupil premium funding. This can be seen in the narrowing of gaps in achievement of eligible pupils. This also demonstrates the school's firm commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The school has worked hard to forge better relationships with parents. The large majority of parents are pleased with the improvements made to the school.
- The local authority acts in partnership with the school to commission further support. As leadership is extremely strong across the school, its support is minimal and indeed it often seeks help from leaders for other schools.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors make good use of their vast experience of governing a school in very different circumstances. They know the school well through regular monitoring visits, and they are kept well informed by regular reports from the executive headteacher and other leaders. They play a strong strategic role alongside the trustees, and have been instrumental in supporting staff appointments and training. They ensure that pay awards reflect how well pupils achieve. They have undertaken extensive training – for example, in understanding data – so know how well the school is performing compared to other schools, and how teaching has improved. They have also had training in safeguarding and internet safety. They have a good knowledge of the school's finances and how, for example, the pupil premium has been successfully used to close gaps in attainment. They also understand how the sports premium has been used to widen the experience of sports and after-school clubs for pupils, and improved the teaching of sports. This extensive knowledge helps them to support and challenge the school, and make sure that all statutory duties are fulfilled, including those relating to safeguarding.

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	138404
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425160

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Cooke
Headteacher	Debbie Rogan (Executive Headteacher) Erica Barnett (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01268 727751
Fax number	01268 470090
Email address	admin@briscoe-pri.essex.sch.uk

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