

# Brinkley Grove Primary School

Rawlings Crescent, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex CO4 9GF

## Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good. Some class teachers do not demonstrate sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Subject leaders are not consistently effective in their work. Some do not precisely monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, or the progress that pupils make in each subject.
- Pupils', especially boys', progress in reading has not been good enough. Pupils currently in the school are making better, but not yet good, progress.
- In key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils make variable progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is variable. This is because some teachers do not routinely provide work that is well matched to pupils' capabilities.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not ensured that teachers plan learning that is well suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers too often allow poorly presented and imprecise work to go unchallenged. As a result, pupils in some classes do not develop the necessary skills in organising and presenting their work.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, well supported by governors, is correctly accelerating the pace of school improvement. Pupils' progress is increasing, in particular in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is provided for well. Adults have a precise understanding of pupils' social and emotional needs and offer appropriate support.
- Leaders have ensured that the school is a safe and welcoming place to learn. Positive and productive relationships are the norm. Pupils typically behave well and are sensitive and caring towards each other.
- Children make a good start to their education as the quality of provision in the early years is good. Leadership of the early years is strong. Children make good progress socially and academically.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes by:
  - ensuring that the high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and well-planned learning seen in some classes, is replicated by all teachers across the curriculum
  - continuing to develop the teaching of reading to ensure that pupils, especially boys, make improved and accelerated progress
  - making sure that all teachers insist on the best-quality presentation of pupils' work in their books and folders, irrespective of the subject being taught.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - equipping subject leaders with the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively
  - developing the leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so these pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve outcomes by:
  - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 receive the high-quality teaching and support they need to make at least good progress from their individual starting points.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been consistently good. The respected and calmly determined headteacher has correctly challenged practice that is not good enough, and continues to do so. As a result, there is an increase in the pace of school improvement. While the quality of provision in English and mathematics is improving, pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable, especially in reading.
- Subject leaders have not all fully embraced their roles in holding teachers to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the progress pupils make. Teachers do not consistently apply high expectations of what pupils can achieve across the curriculum and consequently pupil progress is variable. There are areas of strong practice. For example, decisive and organised leadership in the early years has brought about rapid improvements so that children are making good progress.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires improvement. Adults have a good understanding of these pupils' needs and have put in place appropriate strategies to support them out of the classroom. However, leaders do not ensure that teachers plan suitable learning activities that enable pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make the progress of which they are capable. The use of additional funding for these pupils is therefore not fully effective.
- The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the school. Senior leaders have used this information to take action to improve outcomes, for example in the early years, and in mathematics and writing at key stage 2. Recent actions to improve pupil achievement have heightened pupils' enthusiasm for, and skills in, reading. It is too early to judge the impact on pupil progress over time.
- Staff understand and support the vision that Brinkley Grove should be a school in which high expectations are commonplace and pupils develop socially and academically. While their performance is increasingly well managed and adults value the many training opportunities they have access to, not all teachers are skilled at putting this vision into practice when planning learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum affords pupils equal opportunities to develop a breadth of knowledge and skills. Senior leaders are now making appropriate adjustments to the curriculum where necessary. For example, leaders' recent changes to the genre of texts taught are helping to improve pupils', specifically boys', achievement in reading.
- The curriculum is enriched by sporting, musical and science clubs, visiting opera workshops and speakers from different faith groups. Leaders also ensure that pupils gain an appreciation of the cultural diversity that exists within the school and wider community. As a consequence, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is provided for well and they are being prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.

- School leaders work with considerable success to involve parents in their children's education. Parents have opportunities to attend workshops to learn more about pupils' reading and writing, as well as themed assemblies and a parent forum. Almost all parents who responded on the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, are supportive of the school. Comments such as 'good two-way communication', and 'concerns are taken seriously and appropriately addressed', are typical of parents' appreciation of the work of school staff and that of the headteacher in particular.
- Leaders are making progressively more effective use of additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know the barriers to learning that these pupils face and use this information to put appropriate support in place. For example, as a result of individual mentoring and nurture groups, these pupils are increasingly confident both academically and socially.
- School leaders now make good use of sport premium funding. High proportions of pupils take advantage of the wide variety of sporting clubs, competitions and training. Pupils' confidence and skills in sport are increasing as a result.

### **Governance of the school**

- The quality of governance has improved. Governors now present robust challenge and appropriate support to the headteacher and his senior team.
- The governing body recognises that it did not act quickly enough to challenge areas of underachievement in the past. Under the knowledgeable and dedicated chair of the governing body, governors have reviewed and improved their practice. Evidence from detailed minutes of governors' meetings demonstrates that governors make good use of their experience and knowledge to support the increased pace of school improvement.
- Governors receive detailed information about the quality of education provided at Brinkley Grove. They carry out regular visits to the school to assure themselves of the accuracy of the information they are given. Governors write comprehensive reports, offer appropriate recommendations and undertake visits to ensure leaders have acted on these recommendations.
- Governors carry out careful monitoring of the effectiveness with which leaders make use of additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils are better supported and are making improved progress.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors and the headteacher have placed the highest priority on ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. In this, they are successful and there is a clear culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Adults are appropriately trained in relevant safeguarding issues, including those relating to the government's 'Prevent' duty. They are alert to their responsibilities in keeping children safe and report any concerns appropriately and in line with the school policy. Adults receive appropriate feedback on actions that leaders have taken to follow up any concerns that have been reported.

- Pupils say they feel safe. They stated that the school site is one in which they feel secure. Pupils explained the strategies that they would use to stay safe in a variety of settings, including when using the internet. They also commented that adults look after them well. Almost all parents agree that Brinkley Grove is a happy and safe school in which to learn.
- Governors carefully check that school leaders carry out appropriate checks on adults who work in the school. The chair of the governing body visits the school to make sure leaders implement any recommendations agreed as a result of these checks.
- The headteacher ensures that records of actions taken when a pupil is at risk and in need of support are securely kept and well organised. Inspection evidence demonstrates that leaders take appropriate action when there are concerns about a pupil's well-being.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent within, and across, year groups. The high expectations and carefully planned learning seen in some classes is not evident in others. As a consequence, pupils make variable progress across the curriculum.
- In some classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve are not high enough. Where this is the case, pupils are not sufficiently challenged and they work well within their capabilities. Inspectors saw examples of pupils in key stage 1, including the most able, completing work easily and having to wait patiently as others caught up.
- Teachers do not provide consistently well for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In several classes these pupils are provided with work that has not been sufficiently amended to meet their needs. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply high standards of literacy in subjects across the curriculum. This is particularly the case in science. Too often, the nature of the task, and the worksheets provided, restrict what pupils can do. Pupils respond well where teachers adapt learning activities appropriately. For example, in one Year 5 class pupils were making good use of both literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects.
- The high standard of writing and good quality of presentation seen in impressive corridor displays of pupils' work is not consistently evident in pupils' books. In some classes, teachers do not encourage pupils to present work as well as they should. In these classes, teachers do not consistently identify or correct imprecise spelling and drawing. Consequently, some pupils continue to repeat mistakes. This is particularly the case in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Work seen in pupils' topic books demonstrates that the quality and quantity of teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics varies. For example, in some key stage 2 classes pupils have had too few opportunities to develop investigative skills in science, whereas in others pupils skilfully analysed the experiments that they had conducted.

- The teaching of reading is improving. Teachers are increasingly skilled in developing pupils' understanding of more complex texts and vocabulary. For example, pupils in one upper key stage 2 class gained a deeper understanding of the meaning of language as the teacher skilfully challenged them to compare two books they had been studying.
- Where teachers have high expectations, develop interesting learning activities and question well, pupils relish the opportunities they are given. For example, in upper key stage 2, most-able pupils were able to apply their numeracy skills to increasingly complex mathematical problems. One pupil commented that 'it is hard work, but in the end, we get it and it is great fun.'
- Teaching assistants often make a positive contribution to the confidence and learning of the pupils they support. For example, these adults make good use of their training when helping small groups of pupils to develop their skills in mathematics and English.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have placed a high priority on developing pupils' confidence and social development. The impact of this is evident in pupils' enthusiasm and good humour in their learning and play.
- School leaders ensure that pupils who need additional support receive it. For example, as a result of the work of external professionals, pupils who have previously found attending school and engaging in learning difficult are making considerably better progress, socially and academically.
- Pupils appreciate the work of the adults who support them. For example, one child explained how the mentor working with her 'has really boosted my self-esteem'. Pupils are confident that if they are anxious, or have concerns, adults will listen and put things right.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is and the various forms it can take. They know the upset it can cause. One pupil explained that 'We should not do it (bullying) as we would not like it done to ourselves.' Pupils told inspectors that bullying is an unusual occurrence at their school. They also have confidence that adults would act swiftly and appropriately were it to happen.
- Leaders ensure pupils are provided with leadership opportunities such as 'Eco' leaders, play leaders, or school councillors. Pupils undertake these responsibilities seriously and, importantly, recognise the skills that they are developing. One pupil told an inspector that being a play leader 'helps us interact and develop qualities as a person'.
- Pupils have opportunities to contribute to their local community through charity work and work with a local supermarket. School leaders have plans to do more to provide pupils with age-appropriate careers information advice and guidance.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They understand the importance of being caring and considerate towards each other both in their learning and when socialising. One pupil commented that 'behaviour is good here because people are kind to each other'. Inspection evidence confirms this to be the case.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons. They are enthusiastic in their classwork and supportive of their classmates. To their credit, even in lessons where activities are not well matched to their interests and abilities, many pupils retain their positive attitudes. In the small numbers of instances where pupils' attention wavers, they respond quickly as adults bring them back on task.
- There is a positive and cheerful atmosphere around the school. Pupils play happily and with great energy at break and lunchtime. They mix well and look out for each other's well-being.
- Overall, pupils attend well. They informed inspectors that this was because they enjoy learning and playing alongside their friends. School leaders carefully monitor each pupil's attendance and take appropriate action where they have concerns. As a result, the attendance for the small number of pupils who have not previously attended as often as they should is increasing.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Over time, the progress that pupils have made, from their individual starting points on entry to key stage 2, has not been high enough. This is because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been variable.
- Under the previous school accountability measure in 2015 at the end of key stage 2, pupils made significantly less progress than their peers nationally in reading and mathematics. In 2016, pupils in Year 6 made similar progress to their peers nationally in writing and mathematics. However, they did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally in reading. This was particularly the case for boys. As a result of leaders' amendments to how reading is taught, current pupils are making stronger progress.
- At the end of key stage 1, in 2016, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics and reading were in line with national averages, while the proportion achieving the expected standard in writing was lower.
- Key stage 1 outcomes varied for different ability groups. For example, high proportions of most-able pupils achieved 'greater depth' in reading and writing, while lower proportions of middle-ability pupils achieved the expected standards in writing. School assessment information and work seen in pupils' books indicates that pupils are making improved, but not yet consistently good, progress.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics has been in line with the national average. Evidence seen on this inspection indicates that similar proportions of Year 1 pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard. Given these pupils' individual starting points this does not represent good progress.

- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, made progress similar to other pupils nationally in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In key stage 2 these pupils currently in school continue to make progress in line with other pupils. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made variable progress in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. While in some key stage 1 classes these pupils now make strong progress, in others their achievement remains mixed.
- School leaders explained that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make variable progress. Inspection evidence supports their view. This is because some teachers do not plan learning that is well matched to these pupils' needs.
- The progress that pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics fluctuates. For example, the stronger progress seen in history was not as evident in science or modern foreign languages. Leaders have rightly identified improving pupils' progress across the curriculum as a priority for the school.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years provision is well led. The leader of this provision has had a significant impact in improving standards across the early years. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average in 2016. Inspection evidence indicates that a greater proportion of children are on track to achieve a good level of development this year. Children are now making good and sometimes better progress from their individual and varied starting points.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving and is good. Adults accurately identify the capabilities of each child when they join the Reception class. Making good use of this information, staff put in place activities that are well matched to children's interests and needs. For example, additional sessions for children who need support with their communication skills are helping them develop greater confidence and make better progress.
- Children behave well. They understand the importance of sharing and turn-taking and encourage each other in their learning and play. One child carefully explained that she was cutting a sandwich and that 'you have to cut it in the middle so you can share it'. Children's increasing confidence and maturity in social situations was clearly evident in their cheerful conversations and good behaviour over lunch.
- Children know what is expected of them by their teachers. They settle into the clearly understood routines and move between activities purposefully and enthusiastically. They quickly acquire skills in English and mathematics. Children are proud of their achievements. One child confidently showed her work and explained, 'I am writing full sentences now.'
- Staff place a high priority on children's safety and well-being. For example, adults are watchful and alert as children make good use of the well-resourced and secure outdoor learning space.



- The early years leader has created a learning environment that is a vibrant and stimulating. It is well organised and supports each area of learning across a broad and interesting curriculum. Children are being well prepared for key stage 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	131219
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10000514

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miles Moseley
Headteacher	Darren Smith
Telephone number	01206 852266
Website	<a href="http://www.brinkleygrove.essex.sch.uk">http://www.brinkleygrove.essex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@brinkleygrove.essex.sch.uk">info@brinkleygrove.essex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 July 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is larger than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils to whom the pupil premium applies is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or statement of educational needs is also in line with the national average.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons. Several of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- The inspection team carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in books, folders and on display. On several occasions the scrutiny of work was carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with pupils at break and lunchtimes and during visits to each classroom.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, teachers, support staff, seven governors, a representative from the local authority and two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation which included information about pupils' attendance, achievement and behaviour; school self-evaluation and improvement planning; safeguarding; the curriculum; governor meetings and the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors considered the views of 71 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as of those who spoke to the inspection team over the course of the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the views of 66 pupils and 26 staff who responded to the online surveys.

## Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Milligan	Ofsted Inspector
James Richards	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Tims	Ofsted Inspector

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