

The Brent Primary School

London Road, Stone, Dartford, Kent DA2 6BA

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Inclusion lies at the heart of this outstanding school. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher underpins the school's sustained improvement.
- The school's core values, expressed in its motto, 'Inspiring Ambition Through Learning' are evident at every turn.
- Governors, leaders, and staff are fully committed to ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can. They work successfully to sustain the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- As a result of highly effective teaching, pupils make outstanding progress, whatever their starting points. In the last five years, pupils' rates of progress have been significantly higher than average in almost all respects.
- The imaginative curriculum thoroughly engages pupils. They enjoy learning and make every effort to do well.
- Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously and they benefit from clear guidance on how to improve.
- Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own learning and reflect maturely on their achievements and how to improve.
- Children in the early years thrive due to the wide range of stimulating and challenging activities. They are happy, very well looked after and love their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is nurtured from the outset. They develop a strong sense of social responsibility, tolerance, and fair play.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and mutually respectful. A strong sense of harmony pervades the school. Pupils are unfailingly friendly, polite, courteous, and well behaved. They take great pride in their work.
- Support for pupils' welfare is outstanding and extends to their families. The Inclusion Manager and Family Liaison Coordinator work hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Although attendance is good overall, a few pupils are persistently absent.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce persistent absenteeism by sustaining efforts to convince parents that full attendance is vital for their children's education.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, together with the strong senior leadership team, have created a strong sense of purpose across the school. Staff and indeed pupils share a vision of high levels of success. Leaders and governors have successfully created an ethos of high expectations. The ambition to be as inclusive as possible permeates every aspect of school life.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths. There is no complacency, indicating their uncompromising approach to sustaining strengths and to further improvement.
- Leaders monitor the work of teachers carefully. There is a strong sense of a reflective learning community, with staff routinely sharing ideas and exploring what works best for their pupils. Teachers new to the profession are supported extremely well. The school recruits graduate tutors, supports their studies and mentors their practice. As a result, they typically stay on as teachers, making a valuable contribution to continuity in pupils' learning.
- Teachers and support staff understand exactly what is expected of them. Pupils benefit from consistently effective approaches, for example to the teaching of phonics, which help them build on what they have learned in previous classes.
- Additional training for teachers is planned carefully so that any areas in need of development are quickly improved. Staff appreciate the many opportunities for professional development and feel valued. The performance management system is used effectively to raise standards. It has resulted in a highly skilled group of teachers and a team of support staff whose impact is evident in the achievements of all groups of pupils.
- Leaders monitor pupils' progress throughout the year carefully. This provides an accurate view of how well pupils are doing in relation to expectations of the national curriculum and to their personal targets. Any gaps in their learning are quickly addressed. Teachers' accurate understanding of pupils' skills is central to the drive for continuous improvement.
- An imaginative approach brings the curriculum to life and effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The school's 'Ignite' curriculum is aptly named as it certainly sparks pupils' interest. Recent studies in Year 6, for example, included the Victorian era and the first world war. Pupils' writing about workhouses, the contrast between rich and poor and conditions in the trenches showed great empathy, compassion, and a strong condemnation of injustice.
- The curriculum is designed to develop personal skills as well as academic excellence in order to create well-rounded citizens for the future. Pupils have a deep understanding of how core values help them develop as responsible young people and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils practise, consolidate and extend their reading, writing and mathematics skills in a wide variety of activities. Year 1 pupils, for example, attached speech bubbles to

photographs they had taken to illustrate their group story, 'The toys who got left behind.' Pupils in Year 6 created graphs of Victorian infant mortality rates.

- The school makes excellent use of the additional funding it receives. Pupils who are disadvantaged receive effective additional support to ensure that they make strong progress and have similar opportunities to learn as others.
- Additional physical education and sports funding enables the school to broaden the range of opportunities that pupils have. A 'School Sport Organising Crew', including staff and pupils, has been set up. Effective links have been established with secondary schools and external agencies. A quick response was made to an analysis of levels of obesity among pupils. For example, a healthy school action plan has resulted in a reduction in the consumption of fizzy drinks and increased participation in sports clubs.
- Parents are highly complimentary about the school. They feel welcomed and well informed. They have a high regard for the quality of leadership and teaching throughout the school. They rightly believe that their children are safe and very well looked after.

Governance of the school

- Governors are well informed and highly skilled. Their secure grasp of the school's performance, together with regular visits, enables them to ask insightful questions and make excellent contributions to the school's development.
- Governors seek assurance that pupil premium funding has a positive impact on improving the experiences for disadvantaged pupils. They have a clear picture of the gains in pupils' progress across the school.
- Governors are fully committed to inclusion and share the leaders' drive for excellence in everything the school does. They are supportive of the school's work in encouraging parents to be partners in their children's learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders at all levels ensure that systems for keeping pupils safe are robust. The school's records are up to date and checked regularly by the headteacher and safeguarding governor.
- Staff and governors responded appropriately to recent guidelines on safeguarding, including those relating to female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and pupils at risk of radicalisation. Governors and staff have recently attended training on these issues. The Inclusion Manager, Family Liaison Coordinator and Designated Safeguarding Lead meet regularly to support pupils. Child protection plans are reviewed regularly.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe. They fully understand how to look after themselves in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils also care for each other. They would confidently speak to an adult if they had any concerns about themselves or a friend.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils make rapid progress because teachers plan work with an appropriate level of challenge that makes them think. For example, pupils in the lowest of four mathematics sets in Year 6 used strategies they had learned previously to solve time problems. Skilful questioning and a variety of resources supported their learning. After completing the challenging task, one boy said, 'I love maths.'
- Pupils rise to the high expectations that teachers have for all groups. This was evident, for example, in the progress pupils were making in Year 1. From the beginning of the year, when their writing consisted of simple sentences, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar had greatly improved. Their written work included well-constructed poems about a derelict house, such as:

`Curtains flapping
Empty windows
Crumbling brick
Sliding tiles
Abandoned paths...'

- Staff assess pupils' needs exceptionally well. Teachers check progress very carefully and identify any gaps in learning. They use this information skilfully to devise groups of lessons that are precisely focused on what pupils need to learn next. Pupils regularly respond well to the additional challenges that teachers pose because they have a thirst for learning.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers. Their shared understanding of how individual pupils are getting on enables them to make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning.
- Teachers are very knowledgeable and challenge pupils effectively. This was evident during a lesson on computer programming. Pupils rose to the challenge and rapidly learned, with minimal prompts, how to write commands to create regular polygons on the screen.
- Phonics teaching is highly effective and pupils have scored highly in the Year 1 phonics screening checks since they were introduced. Younger pupils increasingly use their phonics knowledge to good effect when reading and writing unfamiliar words.
- Staff support reading very well. Regular guided reading sessions include tasks which challenge pupils to draw inferences from texts. Older pupils analyse how authors use various strategies to engage the reader. They develop strong comprehension skills which support their accuracy and fluency when reading aloud.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that lessons build on pupils' understanding effectively. They focus on mastering concepts and then provide opportunities for pupils to solve problems. This approach has a key role in deepening pupils' understanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. Their needs are assessed accurately and interventions, both during lessons and in withdrawal groups, help them to make rapid progress from their starting points. Pupils who have disabilities, such as visual impairment, receive bespoke help and thrive

in the supportive environment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. School leaders know pupils' families exceptionally well. They understand when they need additional support to ensure that their children attend school regularly. The school offers well-attended breakfast and after-school care to all pupils.
- Parents were fulsome in their appreciation of the school's attention to pupils' development and welfare. Their numerous comments included, 'she feels part of a big family', 'a very caring school' and, 'The before and after-care services are amazing.'
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and very well looked after. Bullying is a rare occurrence. Pupils are confident that adults would move swiftly to stop it.
- Vulnerable pupils and those with highly complex needs are looked after with great care and attention. The Inclusion Manager and Family Liaison Coordinator work exceptionally well together. Their work often involves close liaison with external agencies, ensuring that the most appropriate support reaches families in a timely manner. Many parents wrote about how they had been helped during difficult times.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Positive relationships are nurtured throughout the school, resulting in classrooms where pupils are fully involved in their learning. Pupils' behaviour in class, around the school and during assemblies is exemplary. Pupils cooperate with one another and are mutually supportive. They are positive and interested in their learning, and have taken on board the notion of a 'growth mindset'. Pupils readily talk about 'getting out of the pit', a reference to the strategies they are prompted to use when stuck.
- The number of behaviour incidents is exceptionally low. Pupils look after each other and demonstrate very high levels of care and friendship.
- Attendance is above the national average due, not least, to pupils' enjoyment of school. A few pupils are persistently absent and the school makes every effort to encourage and support their parents to ensure their full attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- In almost all respects, pupils' performance has been significantly better than average in recent years. Since 2014, this has included the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a testament to the school's success in helping pupils to overcome barriers to learning. In 2015, the school was in the top 10% nationally for progress and the top 20% for attainment.
- Current assessment information collected by the school is demonstrating a positive picture. Work in pupils' books confirms that pupils are making good and often exceptional progress from a range of starting points.

- The most able pupils are making excellent progress. A recent focus on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics is bearing fruit. In 2016, the few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6, who were among the most able in mathematics, achieved results equal to or above the national score for other pupils.
- Pupils achieve well in science. All except a small group of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities reached above average standards in 2016.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress from their starting points. Their progress alongside others is very closely tracked and monitored. Gaps in their learning or misconceptions are very quickly addressed and followed up very well in the classroom.
- Pupils across the school enjoy reading. They make very good progress through the provision of carefully selected collections of books that are more demanding as they move up. Although pupils are free to choose books from the school library, even the most able readers in Year 6 follow a programme that includes the analysis of texts.
- The older pupils who read to the inspectors were exceptionally confident. They explained how wide reading helped with their writing – providing ideas for the use of literary devices such as metaphor, alliteration, and personification. Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are as well developed in subjects other than English as in their English books.
- The most able pupils are all working at greater depth across the curriculum. They made insightful comments. For example, they remarked that the requirement to demonstrate prowess in writing by using hyphens sometimes constrained their creativity.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The leader of the early years team demonstrates the determination, expertise and skills to sustain the highly effective provision. She has managed the expansion to three classes very well. Staff, including those new to the age group, are very well supported.
- Parents are highly engaged. They are made very welcome and see themselves as part of their children's education. Parents record any significant moments in their child's development that occur at home. They value opportunities to work alongside their children, such as 'stay and play' mornings. During the recent international book week, they read with their children each afternoon.
- The learning environment is highly stimulating. Both indoors and outside children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop in all areas. The teaching is highly effective. Adults promote children's personal development and communication skills at every opportunity.
- Children are well motivated and develop the characteristics of effective learning. They are curious, resilient, and creative. They develop good levels of independence and show good self-control. Children are kept safe and secure both indoors and outdoors. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid.
- Staff keep a close eye on children's development across all areas of learning. They visit pre-school settings and children's homes, and observe children carefully for the first

three weeks of the year to establish their starting points. After six weeks, refinements are made to these assessments. Typically, children start below the expectations for their age. Thereon, information is entered into a sophisticated electronic system that allows staff to keep track of children's development and to respond to any emerging gaps.

- Children, including those who are disadvantaged, typically make very good progress from a low starting point. The proportion reaching a good level of development has been above average over the last two years and is set to be similar at the end of this year. This means that children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	140592
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10024479

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Catherine Stafford
Headteacher	Sue Nicholson
Telephone number	01322 223943
Website	www.brent.kent.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@brent.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school complies with the Department for Education's guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is a very popular school and has been oversubscribed for several years.
- Around half of the pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups. This is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is also broadly average.
- Until this year, the school enrolled two forms on entry. In September, it expanded to a three-form-entry school, with the addition of a third Reception class.

- The school runs after-school and breakfast clubs
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The Brent Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 February 2014, retaining its name. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The headteacher provided support for another school as an associate headteacher until April 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed activities in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and a member of the local authority.
- Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. They talked to pupils at breaktimes and in the lunch hall, in lessons and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documents, including information on pupils' performance across the school, school improvement plans, the school's evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, the governing body's minutes, and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of books to see what progress had been made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 77 responses to the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View. In addition, inspectors evaluated 48 returns to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Jenner	Ofsted Inspector

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