

Brackenbury Primary School

Locks Hill, Portslade, Brighton, East Sussex BN41 2LA

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils.

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school's overall effectiveness has declined since the last inspection. Standards of attainment are lower than the national average at the end of the Reception Year, Year 2 and Year 6.
- There has been turbulence in leadership as the school expanded to include key stage 2. This has resulted in the decline in pupils' progress not being addressed swiftly enough.
- Recent rapid improvements can be seen in some areas. However, leaders and governors do not yet have an accurate enough picture of the weaknesses that still remain in the school.
- Pupils do not always have positive attitudes to learning or towards the views of others.
- Pupils' phonics knowledge is underdeveloped, and teaching of phonics is not always well matched to pupils' needs.
- The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Staff do not use assessment of pupils' learning well enough. Some groups of pupils, such as the most able, do not make the progress that they should.
- Teaching in the early years is weak. By the end of the Reception Year, many children are not prepared well enough for learning in Year 1.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has shown determination to improve outcomes for pupils. Progress is beginning to improve.
- Some teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan lessons well to meet the pupils' needs. This is increasing the rate of progress for some pupils.
- Arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders and governors are enthusiastic about their roles. Their expertise is developing, and they work productively with the headteacher.
- Most pupils enjoy their education and, as a result, attendance has improved.
- Parents are supportive of the school and the headteacher. They appreciate the stability and sense of ambition she has brought to the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision for children in the early years by:
 - ensuring that teaching is planned to meet children’s needs
 - making activities engaging so that children are excited to learn
 - developing assessment practice so that children’s progress can be monitored more accurately
 - improving the learning environment so that it is a stimulating place for children to learn in.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and address the legacy of underperformance, by:
 - raising teachers’ expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that gaps in pupils’ knowledge are filled
 - making sure that assessments of pupils’ learning are accurate so that learning can be planned more effectively to meet pupils’ needs.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors by:
 - ensuring that monitoring is timely, rigorous and evaluative.
- An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Many members of the leadership team are relatively new in their role. They are united and enthusiastic about their work, but so far some have had limited opportunities to drive improvement. They have received training, but they have yet to hold staff to account for pupils' progress. Leaders are ambitious for pupils, but they have not yet challenged staff to ensure that pupils make sufficiently rapid progress in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers have an overgenerous view of the improvements that have been made in the school. They have overseen some effective work to start improving pupils' achievement, but have not yet challenged teachers to make sufficiently rapid improvement.
- Monitoring by leaders is developing, but it is not yet ensuring change is fast enough to close the gaps in pupils' learning.
- The school has been supported over the past few years by the local authority to ensure that there is leadership in place. However, this has not been wholly successful as there have been many changes. Other support has helped the school to develop more effective practice in subject areas. However, this support has not yet had enough impact on improving outcomes for pupils.
- A lack of precision in strategic planning means that governors find it hard to hold leaders to account. Plans lack clear ways of measuring improvements during the year, and slow progress is not always identified.
- In the current assessment system, there is conflicting and confusing data, which makes it hard for leaders to challenge the progress of different groups of pupils. Assessment information is not reliable enough.
- Leaders cannot yet demonstrate precisely the impact that pupil premium and sport funding has made to improve provision for pupils. Their monitoring is not evaluative enough nor built on clear evidence.
- Leaders do not measure the impact of the support they give to pupils carefully enough, especially for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about trips which, and visitors who, bring the curriculum to life. The curriculum is further enhanced by opportunities for pupils to engage with other children in the local community, such as in the 'children's parade', concerts and sporting events.
- All stakeholders are pleased with the appointment of the new headteacher, and they are positive about the changes she has made to the school.
- Parents support the school wholeheartedly. They say that they have been pleased with recent improvements, and that their children are happy at school.
- All staff are proud to work at the school, and those who have been at the school for some time confirm that improvements have been taking place recently.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and passionate about their role in the school. There is increased expertise in the governing body, but governors are not yet holding leaders to account for the standards achieved by pupils, which remain too low in all areas of the curriculum.
- Governors have formed good relationships with the new leadership team and visit the school regularly to talk to staff and pupils. They have worked with staff and pupils to ensure that they know their views, and to plan further developments. They have not yet challenged leaders to bring about more rapid improvements in outcomes for pupils.
- Governors are clear about how pupil premium and sport funding is being spent, but they are not yet challenging leaders to show the impact that this makes on pupils' achievement.
- Governors carefully carry out their duty to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff and governors understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding matters.
- Leaders carry out all necessary checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, and work with other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The school has worked with agencies to develop their practice, such as in anti-bullying, and parents told inspectors that bullying is rare.
- The school site, split by a car park, is complex. Staff manage this well, ensuring that pupils are very well supervised whenever they need to move between the two buildings. This is challenging for the school, but is organised rigorously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. It also varies between subjects. Improvements made through training and new initiatives are not yet having a strong enough impact on improving outcomes for pupils across the entire school.
- In some initiatives and in some classes, such as in developing writing, skilful teaching is helping pupils to make better progress. This improved teaching is tackling gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, but there are still too many gaps in pupils' understanding. These gaps in spelling are clearly evident through examination of pupils' written work across the school. The headteacher has already identified improving spelling as a next step for development.
- Leaders have introduced a new phonics approach. So far, this is having a limited impact on pupils' achievement, as not all staff are using it well. Leaders have not ensured that those pupils who did not pass the phonics screening check catch up quickly, and teaching in Year 3 and 4 does not address this well enough.

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Some teachers plan well for the most able pupils, but the work in pupils' books was seen to be too easy for some. Pupils' written work shows that teachers do not routinely challenge pupils to achieve all that they can in the time available. Sometimes teachers accept work that is not the pupils' best. When pupils are able to choose work from a range of challenges, teachers do not ensure that pupils are challenging themselves enough. Some of the most able pupils spend time on work which is too easy for them.
- For pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, support is often engaging, but can lack impact on their progress. Adults have formed warm relationships with pupils, who, in turn, respond well to strategies to engage them. Where support is precisely targeted to meet pupils' needs, it is effective. However, sometimes when the work is either too hard or too easy, these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' skills in the teaching of mathematics are improving, particularly in developing pupil's mathematical reasoning skills. The headteacher and the mathematics leader have introduced a well-thought-through approach to ensure that pupils are fluent in their mathematical skills, and some are able to give well-reasoned answers. These improvements in reasoning are not fully embedded, but in some year groups, more rapid progress is now being made, and this can be seen in pupils' work.
- When pupils fall behind in their learning, the school provides appropriate support to help them catch up. Where teachers match this support well to pupils' needs, it is very effective. However, some pupils find it hard to settle when they are not motivated by the tasks.
- Pupils read regularly and are keen to talk about what they have read. This is as a result of leaders' work to promote reading and motivate children to achieve. Initiatives are in place to encourage pupils to read more, and pupils read at home frequently. Although most pupils are reading books at an appropriate level for their ability, some pupils are finding it hard to develop further skills where the level of the book is too hard for them to grasp its meaning.
- A whole-school focus on increasing pupils' vocabulary is beginning to accelerate pupils' progress in writing. Where this is taught well and the new words are clearly explained, pupils are able to use new words in their own work. Not all teachers ensure that these new words are used accurately, and this reduces the impact of this strategy on pupils' writing.
- Pupils make particularly good progress when they are excited and engaged in tasks. During a practical science lesson in key stage 1, one child told an inspector that, 'I can't believe that this is waterproof', before quickly returning to checking the materials in her experiment. Pupils in key stage 2 spoke with great enthusiasm about the Romans. Their reading, writing and history work showed the benefit of this carefully planned learning.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically when taught by a specialist in physical education lessons, but leaders have not carefully tracked the difference this is making to staff competence or in improving pupils' skills.
- Teachers celebrate pupils' work through attractive displays in their classrooms and around the school.
- The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors felt that their children are taught well

and make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils are positive about their school and their learning. They enjoy all aspects of school life, especially visits and trips to places of interest in the community.
- Pupils enjoy representing their school, in choirs, bands and sports teams.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, and talk with confidence about keeping themselves safe online. Pupils are clear about what is safe to do and what to do if they ever feel unsafe.
- Pupils spoke of occasional bullying in the past, but said that this no longer happens and that staff deal with this well.
- Pupils find it harder to talk about how the school teaches them to be healthy. They know about healthy eating and the benefit of exercise. They found it harder to explain how to manage their emotions or deal with worries.
- Pupils show a good understanding of equality and were unanimous in the school's expectation for every child to be treated fairly. However, in discussions, they did not always show respect for the views of others.
- There are opportunities for pupils to develop cultural awareness, but these are not yet deeply embedded.
- A lunchtime club is providing care and support for pupils who find these unstructured times difficult. Staff are skilled at supporting the development of social skills, and pupils benefit from this provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils are inattentive when their work is not well matched to their needs. At these points, they do not remain focused, and consequently do not make the progress that they should. In some classes, teachers are slow to spot when pupils lose interest, and learning time is lost.
- Where pupils are engaged by exciting tasks which stimulate their interest, they work quickly and produce work of a good quality.
- During playtime and lunchtime, most pupils behave well and are kind to each other.
- Pupils are not always respectful to one another in discussions, sometimes interrupting each other or speaking over one another.
- The school has been successful in managing the behaviour of pupils with very challenging behaviour. This is evident in the success of the lunch club. Leaders have been determined to meet the needs of these pupils, and teachers and support staff work well to achieve this. The number of fixed-term exclusions has decreased because

these pupils are well supported. They are now making better progress.

- Leaders have worked closely with families to improve attendance and to reduce persistent absence. This has been successful, and school attendance figures are now in line with national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not made the progress that they should. Published information about pupils' outcomes show that they make slow progress in both key stages 1 and 2. There are still many pupils with gaps in their knowledge and understanding caused by weak teaching in the past. Leaders are beginning to tackle this underachievement successfully.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are well below the national average, and the school was in the lowest 10% of schools nationally at both key stages in these measures. Leaders' assessments show that although progress is improving in some classes, many pupils are not currently making enough progress to catch up as quickly as they should.
- By the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils make less progress than other pupils, and their attainment is well below the national average by comparison with other pupils. In pupils' current work, recent signs of improvement can be seen.
- Too few pupils are achieving higher standards, and this is because teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are too low.
- Outcomes in phonics were below average in 2016 and 2017. The schools' current progress data shows that this year a greater proportion of pupils will achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check, but this is still likely to be below the national average.
- Pupils' current work shows that leaders are starting to be successful in addressing the underperformance from previous poor teaching, and many pupils are now making better progress.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The headteacher has identified the need to strengthen provision in the early years and has been supporting this work herself as the leader for the early years. However, the quality of provision for children in their first year of school is poor.
- Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. By the end of the year, too few children have made good progress and not enough are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- In 2017, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was well below the national figure. School assessment systems show that this is likely to be the case in 2018 as well.
- Assessment is overly generous at times and the most able children are not challenged sufficiently well. Children who find work hard do not have activities that are closely enough matched to their needs.

- Teacher's expectations of both children's learning and behaviour are too low.
- Plans are in place to develop the indoor and outdoor provision, but currently the setting does not engage children and encourage them to learn. The learning environment is spacious, but this is not yet being used to its best advantage.
- The quality of teaching is poor, especially in phonics. There are not enough opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills.
- Activities are not well matched to children's needs. This means that children do not stay motivated. Some find the work too hard and others find it too easy. Adults do not identify this disparity quickly enough or address it appropriately. As a result, children do not make the progress that they could.
- Children are not being encouraged to try things on their own. Consequently, they rely on adults and give up when they find things hard.
- Disadvantaged children are benefiting from a range of support, but the precise impact of these strategies on their progress is not yet being measured. Plans show that some children in the Reception class benefit from additional support from adults.
- Additional adults provide effective support when working with lower-attaining children. They reassure and rephrase questions, encouraging children to have a go.
- Children's books and records of work show that the curriculum is not as exciting as it should be. As a result, children are not sufficiently engaged in their learning and are not motivated to succeed.
- The school works well with parents to support children when they start school. This means that pupils settle into school quickly and are ready to learn.
- The classroom and outdoor area are safe. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

School details

Unique reference number	114413
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10046069

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shelley Baker
Headteacher	Lizzie Mullarky
Telephone number	01273 418 850
Website	www.brackenburyprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@brackenbury.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school first took pupils into key stage 2 in September 2014.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced change in its leadership. During the long-term absence of the previous headteacher, an interim headteacher was in place for one year. The current headteacher became the interim headteacher in March 2017 and substantive headteacher in March 2018. Since the previous inspection, there is a new assistant headteacher, three other senior leaders and a new chair of the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. Learning was observed in all classrooms and also when pupils learned in small groups.
- Inspectors examined a range of work in English and mathematics across the curriculum.
- Inspectors heard pupils read both individually and during class activities.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- An inspector met with the chair of the governing body and seven other governors.
- An inspector met with two different members of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders and spoke to other members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors took account of 69 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 40 free-text comments provided for inspectors. Inspectors also took account of 26 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plans and external reviews of the school. They reviewed the school's website and scrutinised records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Linda Appleby, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Matt Batchelor

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018