

Brisley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Road, Brisley, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5LH

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Governors have not ensured that leaders have maintained an acceptable standard of education. They are now heavily reliant on the support of the local authority to manage the school. Leaders, including governors, do not demonstrate sufficient capacity to improve.
- Governors have had an inaccurate view of the performance of the school over many years.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has declined over time and is inadequate. Middle leaders have not received sufficient training or opportunity to improve the consistency and effectiveness of teaching.
- The school's safeguarding culture is ineffective. There has been laxity in staff recruitment procedures, and poor practice in recording the attendance of vulnerable pupils.
- The curriculum is too narrow.
- The most able pupils do not reach high enough standards in mathematics and writing across key stages 1 and 2.
- In recent years, pupils' progress across key stage 1 has been inadequate in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils have not achieved well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Results in the phonics assessment have declined over three years, and have been well below those found nationally.
- Teachers plan learning that is too often the same for pupils, irrespective of their age or ability. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make enough progress.
- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development in the early years has been below the national average for the previous four years.

The school has the following strengths

- Children settle well and enjoy their learning in Reception. They learn in a well-resourced environment.
- Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the training received this year.
- Pupils attend school well. They are polite and welcoming. Most want to learn and achieve.
- The headteacher has implemented a new assessment system. Adults now have an accurate view of pupils' current performance.

Full report

- In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors effectively perform their statutory duties in holding school leaders to account
 - governors rigorously checking the accuracy of the information they receive from staff about pupils' achievement and in regard to safeguarding
 - sharpening improvement planning, with a focus on improving the quality and consistency of teaching across the school and improving the achievement of all groups of pupils
 - providing suitable training and opportunity for leaders at all levels to systematically improve and check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - implementing and evaluating a curriculum that is suitable to meet the needs of pupils so that they can excel in a wide range of subjects
 - providing all staff with relevant training and guidance to perform their roles and responsibilities, particularly with regards to improving the culture and understanding of safeguarding.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - teachers using pupils' assessment information effectively to plan learning activities that meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes
 - raising adults' expectations of what pupils can achieve, taking into account pupils' starting points or individual SEN and/or disabilities
 - providing suitable challenge so that the most able pupils can excel.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
 - developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages so that all ability groups make good progress from their starting points
 - ensuring that more of the most able pupils reach the higher standards at the end of all key stages in mathematics and writing
 - ensuring that pupils make swift progress in developing their early reading skills so that more pupils consistently reach the national average by the end of Year 1 in the phonics screening check

- increasing the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in the early years class so that children are well prepared for the next stage of their education
 - ensuring that vulnerable pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are provided with the precise support and access to the curriculum they require to achieve well.
- The school may not employ newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school was previously graded as outstanding and therefore exempt from routine inspections. However, since the last inspection, leaders and governors have not responded quickly to national changes in education, nor ensured that pupils make sufficient progress from their starting points. As a consequence, leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils receive an acceptable standard of education.
- Under changing leadership, standards have declined considerably. Staff are not supported and trained well enough to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress. The current headteacher, who took up her post in September 2017, is due to leave the school. Consequently, leadership and the improvements that have been made are fragile.
- The capacity of school leaders to make further improvement is weak. Leaders and governors are heavily reliant on the support they now receive from the local authority. Following a review of the effectiveness of governance that took place in autumn 2017, the local authority issued governors with a warning notice.
- The local authority has removed some of the powers of the governing body and is now responsible for making decisions on the use of finance and the performance management of the headteacher. Recently, the local authority set up an improvement board to oversee the progress the school makes and to provide suitable challenge and support to leaders and governors.
- Since her appointment, the current headteacher has accurately identified the areas for improvement required at the school and has started to implement plans to address them. However, the decline in the standard of teaching, learning and assessment and in pupils' achievement has occurred over several years. The headteacher recognises that improvements have come too late.
- The school did not introduce the national curriculum changes in 2014. Staff confirmed that they did not receive adequate training and development at that time. Consequently, the curriculum design and implementation are inadequate. Older pupils receive a very narrow curriculum of mostly English and mathematics. Pupils say that this is because they have so much ground to catch up. Firm plans are in place for the introduction of a new school curriculum in September 2018.
- Until this year, additional funds have not been allocated sufficiently well to provide support for those who need it. School documents demonstrate that, in 2016/17, the pupil premium grant made little difference to the progress that disadvantaged pupils made. The local authority is now ensuring that leaders use additional funds effectively so that disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities can make better progress.
- Staff spoken with during the inspection appreciate the good-quality training and development they have recently started to receive. They are proud to work at the school. One member of staff echoed the sentiment of others, stating, 'Since September, changes are positive and useful. I feel reinvigorated and more up to date

than before.' Staff understand the school's priorities for improvement and how they contribute to the essential changes required for the school to become better.

- Middle leaders are enthusiastic about their roles. They are now receiving suitable and relevant training and support so they can increase their effectiveness. This is particularly the case for the English leader and the leader of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, middle leaders currently do not review the standard of teaching, learning and assessment sufficiently well or lead improvements.
- The headteacher has introduced a new assessment system. Adults now have a more accurate view of the current attainment of pupils. Leaders are starting to provide additional help and support for pupils who are falling behind. This is in the early stages and it is too soon to fully evaluate the impact on accelerating the progress pupils make. However, there are some improvements in pupils' achievements this year, particularly in Reception.
- Leaders ensure that the physical education (PE) and sport premium is used increasingly well. Pupils receive their PE lessons from specialist coaches and appreciate the teaching they receive.
- Lessons such as music and foreign languages are often led by specialists, and pupils receive instruction of an appropriate standard. Pupils speak enthusiastically about these lessons.
- Parents and carers spoken with over the course of the inspection said that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school, especially in the early years class. They appreciate the sense of community in a small school. However, a few parents expressed concern regarding the quality of teaching and whether their children are sufficiently challenged so they can excel.
- Leaders provide appropriate spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils sit and listen exceptionally well to stories being read in assembly. Pupils demonstrate maturity and respect during times of reflection that are suitable for their age and understanding. Displays around the school promote the school's values and encourage positive attitudes to learning.

Governance of the school

- Governance is ineffective. The local authority has removed the governing body's responsibility for finance and the performance management of the headteacher. Governors have been led by an experienced chair of governors but have not kept up to date well enough with statutory changes.
- The chair of governors agreed that, over time, governors have been complacent and have not focused well enough on improving pupils' achievement. Governors have accepted the information they have received about the position of the school without appropriately checking its accuracy and validity. Governors have not put appropriate checks and balances in place to ensure that the education and welfare of pupils remained strong.
- Many members of the current governing body have the required skills and dedication to support and challenge school leaders. However, until recently, governors have not

attended sufficient training to have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is not strong enough. The school's processes are not reliable in ensuring that all reasonable actions are taken to check on the safety, attendance and well-being of some vulnerable pupils.
- Governors have not ensured that all pupils receive the full-time education to which they are entitled. They have allowed leaders to use exclusions and part-time timetables as the means of managing pupils' behaviour.
- Some staff do not have an appropriate understanding of their role and responsibility in safeguarding vulnerable pupils. Consequently, the implementation of school policies is not robust, and governors are not rigorous when checking this important aspect of the school's work. This is particularly the case with attendance registers.
- Leaders' and governors' checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are not rigorous enough. Staff are not sufficiently well trained, and a number of significant errors remained in the recruitment checks and records until the inspection. The necessary checks and changes were carried out over the course of the inspection to ensure compliance.
- Staff have received their child protection training in line with statutory guidance. The designated safeguarding leader has been updating the recording system for staff concerns, and records are now adequately kept.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Over several years, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been in decline. Until this year, the school has not had an adequate assessment system for adults to use to plan learning that meets the needs of individual pupils in their mixed-age classes. Teachers are not using the information they now hold well enough to accelerate the progress that pupils make.
- Too much teaching is weak. Visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrate that teachers are not challenging pupils of different abilities. For example, too many pupils complete or repeat the same standard of work as they did in the previous year. Consequently, pupils with different abilities are not stretched to consolidate, deepen or widen their learning.
- In key stage 1, the quality of teaching does not provide most-able pupils with enough targeted opportunities for them to excel. For example, although all pupils in key stage 1 are writing regularly, the progress that the most able pupils are making in handwriting, grammar and spelling is not evident in their work over time. By the end of Year 2, too few pupils demonstrate specific skills and abilities at a greater depth despite their promising starting points, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is weak. Teachers use a mixture of early reading programmes

to help pupils learn their letters and sounds. School information shows that there is some success this year but pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 1 is currently still below the national average. This is because work is not tailored to pupils' needs and because adults' expectations of pupils are often too low.

- Teachers' deployment of support staff varies too much. Where support staff are most effective and use the recent training they have received, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are starting to develop their knowledge and understanding. However, in too many classes, the effectiveness of support staff is limited. Too much time is spent on behaviour management rather than improving the learning experience for individual pupils.
- Expectations of presentation are too varied. Too often, poor presentation of work goes unchecked. Teachers do not apply the school's marking and feedback policy consistently. As a result, the standard of presentation in some pupils' books deteriorates over the course of the year. Where the quality of teaching over time is more consistently secure, pupils complete their work well and to the best of their ability.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to learn in other subjects across the curriculum. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are spending a large proportion of time catching up with their mathematics and writing. Pupils have not been well prepared for the wide range of subjects they will experience when they move to secondary school.
- Pupils enjoy reading to adults, both in school and at home. Pupils who read or spoke about their books during the inspection demonstrated a love of reading. They confidently explained the types of books and authors they like to read.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Adults are not consistent or skilled enough in defusing situations if pupils become frustrated with themselves or their learning. More recently, pupils who require emotional support and understanding are provided with specific support in the school's nurture room. There are indications that this extra provision is having some positive effects.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given as part of the school council, where they make decisions about purchasing new resources for their playtimes. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about becoming sports leaders and the additional roles and responsibilities that are becoming increasingly available.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of what bullying is and what it is not. They say that bullying does sometimes happen at school. However, pupils spoken with were able to name an adult who they would be happy to inform. Pupils were confident that adults would deal well with any concerns they had. Pupils learn about keeping safe when using the computers at school and when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are not provided with sufficiently challenging and stimulating work to enable them to make sufficient progress. Some pupils, particularly those who are most able, are often bored and do not need to work or think hard. For others, the work is too difficult and results in frustration. This results in a lack of focus during lessons.
- Leaders have made recent changes to the school's behaviour policy, and pupils appreciate the rewards they now receive. Pupils respond swiftly to teachers' instructions and demonstrate they want to behave and learn well. School records demonstrate that leaders have seen a general improvement in pupils' behaviour over this academic year. However, adults do not consistently apply the new policy well and low-level disruption and too much chatter are a feature of some classes.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions is higher than that found nationally.
- Most pupils attend school well and are punctual. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally. A family worker supports the school and works closely with families who require additional help and support.
- Pupils play well with each other during less-structured times, such as break and lunchtimes. At lunchtime, the hall is filled with pupils enjoying their social time together. Pupils listen and follow adults' instructions quickly and walk around the school sensibly and safely.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes at key stage 1 are inadequate. Standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics do not demonstrate sufficient progress over the two years from leaving Reception. Few pupils work at greater depth in writing and mathematics. This is because not enough is expected of them and they do not have access to activities that inspire and deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated year on year. Pupils either attain above the national average for their age or, as in 2017, too few pupils attain the national standard across reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils make good progress from their starting points as they move through the school. In-school assessment information demonstrates that this fluctuation remains the case.
- Over the previous three years, the proportion of pupils who reached the national standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has declined, with only one in five pupils reaching the expected standard in 2017. This was significantly below the national average. Although, this year, pupils' achievement is improving, the progress pupils are making in developing their early reading skills is not swift enough and does not represent sufficient progress from when they left Reception.
- The proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are too low to report by key stage results for 2017, as this may identify the pupils concerned. The provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN

and/or disabilities is beginning to improve but is not good enough. Support staff are currently receiving training to meet their pupils' needs more precisely during lessons.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- For the previous four years, including 2017, the proportion of children who have reached a good level of development has been below that found nationally. This does not represent good progress for children, who generally start school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. Children, particularly boys, have not been well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- This academic year, children's achievement is improving compared with previous years. Their progress is better than that of older pupils in the school. Adults are using assessment increasingly well to plan learning that is interesting and helping children develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. In a recent moderation of children's achievement, the proportion of children exceeding expectations was greater than that considered by school leaders. Expectations of what children can achieve are still not as consistently high as they should be.
- Teaching is thoughtfully considered and planned. Children have opportunity to practise their skills in all areas of the early years curriculum. Children use the well-resourced outside area well and enjoy using their imagination to develop games to play together.
- Staff ensure that children are well cared for in a warm and friendly environment. Staff are caring and support the children well through questions that help encourage a good use of subject-specific vocabulary. Children are articulate and confident when speaking with adults and each other. For example, one child confidently explained the life cycle of a caterpillar and how it turns into a butterfly.
- Children behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are very motivated to achieve the activities in their challenge book or to explain the next steps in their learning. Work in their learning journeys and in their writing books demonstrates that, this year, more children are at least on track to reach or exceed a good level of development.
- Children are happy and safe. They have settled well into school life. They know and follow the routines well. They enjoy playing considerably with each other. Parents are positive about how well their children have settled at school.
- The teaching of phonics in Reception is strong. Children learn in suitably organised lessons which help them to develop their early reading skills. Those who require additional support undertake their activities in small groups. Children achieve well in this area of the curriculum and their attainment in reading has been consistently above that found nationally.

School details

Unique reference number	121109
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10054285

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Steele
Headteacher	Helen McMurray
Telephone number	01362 668 350
Website	www.brisley.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@brisley.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 May 2011

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum for each subject and each year group.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and are supported in school is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- No pupils speak English as an additional language, and 1.3% are from a minority ethnic group.

- Plans are under way for the school to join the Diocese of Norwich Education Academies Trust.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in every class, jointly with the headteacher, to determine the quality of teaching and learning over time.
- The quality of the work in pupils' books was scrutinised across a range of subjects and all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the school's senior leaders and subject leaders, as well as the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority. The inspector spoke to a group of pupils, listened to pupils read and spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- A wide range of school documents were scrutinised, including minutes of governors' meetings, the school's improvement plan, the school's evaluation of its own performance and information on the current progress and attainment of pupils.
- Reports from local authority visits were evaluated, together with information from a telephone conversation with a representative from governor services.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation around child protection and scrutinised the recruitment checks made by school leaders when employing staff.
- Parents' views were also collected informally at the start of the school day. A meeting was held to gather the views of staff.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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