

Inspection of Brightlingsea Primary School and Nursery

Eastern Road, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex CO7 0HU

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not receive a good education. Two schools merging into a one new school has presented challenges which leaders are beginning to overcome.

The curriculum does not enable pupils to build on their learning from starting school through to the end of year 6. Some teaching is not as good as it should be.

Improvements are being made to reading, mathematics and a few other subjects. This is all very new.

Children get off to a good start in Nursery. They do not not make enough progress during Reception and key stage 1. Early reading skills are taught well. Increasingly, pupils of all ages are reading more often.

Disadvantaged pupils are not supported well enough. Not all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the support they need to help them achieve well.

Expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes are not high enough. Not all pupils feel safe in school because a few pupils misbehave in and out of lessons. Too many pupils are absent from school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since opening as a new school, leaders' and governors' time has been absorbed in reorganising staffing and managing the school's finances. This has been done effectively and has stabilised the school. Less attention has been paid to checking that an ambitious, well-organised curriculum is in place or that it is taught well enough. Assessment is underdeveloped. It does not enable staff to monitor pupils' progress and target support towards those who need it.

In 2019, results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 were low. This year, new resources and training are improving the teaching of reading and mathematics. Teachers' records show that pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, subject leaders have not had enough time or training to check the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Some progress has been made in improving physical education (PE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Learning in science and history remains underdeveloped.

Disadvantaged pupils do not do well enough. Leaders are not identifying the barriers to learning these pupils face. Extra funding is not targeted towards the pupils it is intended for, so that they attend regularly and get the help they need.

Support for pupils with SEND varies widely. Some receive good one-to-one help from teaching assistants in lessons, which engages them in learning. Pupils showing challenging behaviour are not supported well enough. Some of them attend only part of the time and do not learn all subjects. Their needs are not identified early

enough. Procedures to plan additional support for them are not applied rigorously. More than half of the parents who responded during the inspection feel that these pupils are not given the support they need.

Pupils are pleasant and polite. They say that in lessons most pupils behave well but a few regularly disrupt the learning of others. They feel that behaviour depends on the teacher they have and which pupils are in lessons. Not all pupils say that they always feel safe in school because a few pupils often misbehave at breaks and lunchtimes. Weekly PSHE lessons are helping to promote pupils' wider understanding but they do not know enough about British values.

Overall attendance is close to the national average. However, too many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are regularly absent. Leaders have not convinced all parents of the damaging impact absence has on pupils' welfare and progress.

A strengthened governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide good support for leaders but acknowledge that to improve further they need to challenge leaders to show the full the impact of their work in raising pupils' achievement.

In Nursery, effective leadership ensures that children engage in a range of learning and play in a calm, welcoming environment. Early reading, mark-making and use of number are developed well through games, activities and by children finding out for themselves. Learning in Reception is less effective. The headteacher does not have time to lead improvements in this area due to her other duties. Staff engage well with children but the curriculum is not planned to enable children to remember more or build on the knowledge they have learnt previously. Classrooms and the outdoor area are not as vibrant and stimulating as they are in Nursery because they are not looked after well enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All necessary checks are made when appointing new staff to work with children. A team of designated leaders oversee arrangements to safeguard vulnerable pupils and protect them from harm. Child protection records are maintained systematically. Links with other support agencies are firmly established. The school's grounds are secure and access to buildings is carefully controlled.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not enable pupils to achieve well enough. The overall intent of what pupils are expected to learn is not understood fully by all staff. The implementation of current curriculum plans is inconsistent. Leaders should

maintain their focus on improving teaching and learning in reading and mathematics and extend this into science. They should provide the leaders with training in how to improve their subjects. They should allocate sufficient time for them to monitor and evaluate the impact teaching has on the achievement of all pupils.

- Pupils' personal development is underdeveloped. Not enough is done to secure good behaviour or regular attendance. Leaders should re-affirm the school's agreed procedures to manage pupils' behaviour so that all pupils feel safe in school. They should take more action to raise attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Not all disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need to engage fully in learning and achieve well. Governors should monitor the impact of additional funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Not all pupils with SEND receive the support they need. Senior leaders and the coordinator of special educational needs should work more closely with the local authority to review their policy and procedures for pupils with SEND. They should ensure that the needs of pupils are identified early and parents are satisfied with the plans put in place to support their child.
- The headteacher does not have enough time to lead improvements in the early years. Governors intend to appoint an assistant headteacher this term to support senior leaders in leading improvements. They should strengthen leadership of the early years foundation stage.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	114755
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10121327
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	741
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Abbie Fairbairn
Headteacher	Julia Hunt
Website	www.brightlingsea.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. It merged with the local junior school on the same site to become a primary school in September 2018. Leaders also added Nursery provision for two-year-olds. Parents can access wrap-around provision including a breakfast club, after-school club and holiday provision for their children.
- The school is much larger than average.
- The school is maintained by the local authority.
- A new chair of governors took up her role as chair in 2019.
- The school uses the Grow Project to provide alternative, nurture provision for one pupil.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We carried out learning walks to observe the quality of support provided for pupils with SEND. We also walked around school to gauge how effectively leaders promote pupils' behaviour, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- We held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers and three members of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation about the school with a representative of the local authority.
- We observed the school's work. We scrutinised pupils' books. We looked at safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by school leaders.
- We considered 92 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View. Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and for pupils were not used.
- We conducted deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, science, history, PE and PSHE. We visited lessons in these subjects, talked to pupils and looked at their work and had discussions with staff.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Welch

Ofsted Inspector

Susan Sutton

Ofsted Inspector

Sally Nutman

Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020