



# Brightlingsea Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114755  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279442  
**Inspection dates** 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Ruth Frith AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Eastern Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		CO7 0HU
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 302719
<b>Number on roll</b>	262	<b>Fax number</b>	01296 305702
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Kate Poynter
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Julia Hunt

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279442
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a slightly larger than average size infant school situated in the coastal town of Brightlingsea. It is the only infant school in Brightlingsea and nearly all children who attend live in the town. The socio-economic backgrounds of pupils cover the full range and the percentage receiving free school meals is broadly average. Children's attainment on entry to school is also broadly average when compared with children of the same age nationally. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Children are mostly from White British backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is an improving school which now provides a good standard of education. This reflects the school's own view of its development. Standards are rising and are above average. Pupils make good progress because of the success of the recently introduced strategies for reading, writing and mathematics and improvements to teaching and resources. There have been some significant developments in encouraging pupils to write, but there is a lack of focus on handwriting to ensure that letters are correctly formed and joined. Teaching is good overall. However, in those lessons that are satisfactory the pace of learning slows when pupils work on their own. Proficient teaching assistants play an important part in the children's good progress. Provision and standards for children in Reception are good with strengths in the high quality outdoor work and play area and the range of exciting resources. Throughout the school, pupils' concentration is maintained because the curriculum is good and activities are interesting. This results in pupils' having good attitudes, relationships and behaviour. Pupils' attendance has also improved and is now satisfactory. This is a school that cares for its pupils well and helps them to develop confidence as learners. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The enthusiasm and commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors and the improvements in standards and provision indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Staff have a clear understanding of what they do well and identify appropriate priorities for improvement. This arises from the good self-evaluation procedures, the results of which match the inspection findings. The school provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop pupils' handwriting systematically through the school. - Ensure a good pace of learning throughout lessons by clarifying teachers' expectations when pupils are working on their own.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards have continued to rise since 2004 and the overall trend of improvement is above that seen nationally. Efforts to improve the content of pupils' writing have been effective, and reflect the school's recent focus on this area. However, there are still some weaknesses in pupils' handwriting. At the end of the Reception Year children typically achieve the nationally expected goals with some achieving above these. Pupils continue to do well and by the time they reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Most of the pupils in the current Year 2 have met the challenging targets set. There is also evidence of sustained improvement in the younger years. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen due to improved resources, a richer curriculum and better teaching. Standards in art are above those usually seen for children of this age. More capable pupils receive

sufficiently challenging work which results in them achieving well. This can be seen in the increasing percentage of pupils who attain a level above that expected for their age in national assessments. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities usually achieve well because their needs are quickly identified and good support is given by the class teachers and skilled support staff. Similarly, those with English as an additional language progress well because their needs are well met. From entry to school, girls perform better than boys in all areas of learning and this has continued throughout the school. As a result of recent improvements in teaching and the curriculum, boys are now progressing at a faster rate so the gap between their performance and that of the girls is narrowing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils enjoy school and all that it has to offer. They take a lively interest in the local area and in the natural world. The school is working to extend pupils' awareness of the wider world by building more links with people from different cultural backgrounds. The school encourages pupils to think for themselves, to pose questions and to share ideas. This develops an enquiring attitude and nurtures curiosity and interest in learning. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and resourceful and, from Reception, to take responsibility for organising themselves. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities develop very well as learners because of the careful attention given to their individual needs. They have good self-esteem. The school promotes healthy living, and pupils identify healthy choices in what they eat. They have good opportunities for physical exercise and understand why this is important. Pupils learn to keep safe. They make a positive contribution to the school community through the school council and help to look after the environment, for example, by recycling materials, and making compost. They are being equipped well with the skills needed for their future economic well-being. Attendance is satisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and it is now in line with the national average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching is lively and imaginative, sharing a wide-ranging enthusiasm for learning and engaging pupils' interest effectively. Teaching is clearly focused on raising standards, as seen in the refining of approaches to literacy and numeracy to make learning more effective. Teachers use assessment to good effect to monitor the progress being made. They make good use of classroom displays and resources such as interactive whiteboards to reinforce learning. Pupils participate eagerly in practical, creative and investigative activities, developing a broad range of skills. Pupils enjoy writing and become confident in writing at length, assisted by their knowledge of phonics. However, accuracy in handwriting and to a lesser extent

spelling and punctuation is given too little attention and weaknesses are not picked up sufficiently through marking. Handwriting is sometimes poor because good habits are not securely established through systematic teaching. Across the school, teaching has many good qualities which are reflected in pupils' good achievement and zest for learning. However, in lessons that are judged to be satisfactory, the pace of learning sometimes slows when children are working on their own. This is because expectations are not clear enough.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and enriched with a wide range of interesting clubs and visitors that widen pupils' interests and develop their skills. The school makes relevant links between subjects such as English and science to make learning more meaningful for pupils. Also, ICT is used well in a wide range of curriculum areas to enhance learning. New strategies which develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics have been key features of the improved curriculum and have helped to bring about rising standards. Visits also enliven the curriculum and give motivating opportunities for reading and writing. For example, a visit to the fire station gave pupils interesting ideas to write about and left them wanting to find out more from reading books. In Reception, the effective planning ensures children take full advantage of learning through discovery and investigation, and the stimulating activities maintain their interest. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and helps pupils to settle quickly to learning. Resources and the outside learning area are of a high standard. Pupils with learning difficulties have good support and work that is well matched to their capabilities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has good links with various external agencies and there are procedures in place for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. Staff recruitment, training and day-to-day management reflect up-to-date requirements for child protection. Those pupils with a high level of need are well supported so that they develop self-confidence and thoroughly enjoy their time in school. Teaching assistants play an important part in the school's good provision because, together with teachers, they know pupils very well and soon spot if a child is having difficulties or is unhappy. Pupils say they feel safe and know what to do if an incident of bullying were to happen. They are very confident that if they have any worries, these will be dealt with swiftly by an adult. There are good systems for checking on pupils' academic progress and for setting targets. These are used effectively to make sure that pupils make good progress. Parents are kept well-informed about their children's progress. The school is approachable and helpful in resolving difficulties.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good. Since her appointment, the headteacher has gained the confidence of staff, parents and governors and quickly made her mark on the school. She gives clear direction and has been particularly effective in developing a team of professionals who share her vision for the future of the school. Staff take on a variety of responsibilities successfully and subject leadership in English, mathematics and ICT is good. This has resulted in improving standards and good quality provision. There are good systems for checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better. These reflect the school's drive for improvement. The views of all members of the school community are taken into consideration. Financial management and planning are effective and ensure that school developments are adequately financed. Overall, the school gives good value for money. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and play an important role in school development. Governance is good. The school has dealt with nearly all of the issues from the previous inspection successfully and because of the good work of the headteacher, staff and governors, and the continuing trend of improvement, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to say how much we enjoyed visiting Brightlingsea Infants. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking about your school and the work you have done. - You obviously enjoy school and are keen to do good work. - You do well in school and are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. We liked your art work and were pleased to see how well you were using the computers. - All the staff work well to make sure that you learn a lot. They enjoy teaching you and the teaching is good overall. - You behave well and we saw you being kind to each other. You work and play together well. - The things you learn about and the activities you do are good and help to make school interesting. You told us that you particularly like school clubs and visits. - Those of you in Reception have a good time working and playing outside where there are lots of things for you to do. - Staff look after you well and you feel safe in school. - Mrs Hunt and the governors manage the school well so that it continues to improve and you receive a good education. We have agreed with them that your work will be even better if they help you to improve your handwriting and also to learn more quickly when working on your own. Thank you once again and good luck in the future.