

Brightside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132164
Local Authority	ESSEX
Inspection number	293968
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Moore
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Coles
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2002
School address	Brightside Billericay Essex CM12 0LE
Telephone number	01277 655995
Fax number	01277 633152

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Inspection number	293968

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school serving both privately owned and rented homes. Although the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, part of the area served by the school experiences high levels of deprivation. After a period of lower pupil numbers, the roll is rising. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.

Most children are White British. A small proportion are from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils looked after by the local authority is higher than in other schools. Although the proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, the proportion of these with statements of special educational need is above average. When they start in the Foundation Stage, children's skills and knowledge are often below those typical of their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy, and personal and social skills.

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 a good and improving school. The school's leaders correctly identify its effectiveness as good in their latest self-evaluation report. They recognise that there are areas where it needs to improve and develop further. Good leadership and management are demonstrated by the robust systems now in place for checking the school's performance and its progress towards challenging targets. The headteacher provides strong leadership and the staff share her clear vision for the school's development. The senior leadership team, with their well-defined roles and responsibilities, is successfully monitoring, evaluating and improving pupils' performance and the quality of teaching and learning. The governing body actively shapes and evaluates the school's work but rightly acknowledges that it now needs more first-hand knowledge about what, and how, pupils are learning.

Teaching and learning across the school are good. Lessons are lively and working relationships strong. Pupils' differing learning needs are promptly identified and supported. Teachers share learning goals at the start of a lesson and effectively review these in the closing session. Most pupils are aware of their personal targets but opportunities for them to measure their own progress and improve their work lack consistency between classes. Taking into account the above average proportion of pupils who have joined the school other than at the usual times, pupils achieve well. The standards and quality of education in the Foundation Stage are good. Children in Reception make good progress, particularly in their social and communication skills. Standards by the end of Year 2 have risen in the last three years and are now above average, representing good - and for some pupils, very good - progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average and pupils have made good progress overall. Improved systems for checking pupils' progress have highlighted that the pace of progress is not consistent within, and between, year groups. Analysis of pupils' performance in assessments has correctly highlighted writing, and shape and space in mathematics as continuing areas for improvement.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their enjoyment of school is outstanding. Pupils' attendance is above average and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and work well together. They have an outstanding understanding of keeping safe. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living and regularly participate in a wide range of physical activities. The curriculum is good. The school provides pupils with a broad range of activities in lessons and after-school clubs to help them learn. Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know their pupils well and pupils feel safe and sound in school. The school has recently introduced more rigorous and comprehensive systems for checking how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science. These are helping teachers to set challenging targets and provide pupils with support and guidance where it is most needed. The positive impact on pupils' achievement is evident in the results of recent end-of-year tests and assessments. The school's links with outside agencies, other providers and parents are good. In maintaining the good standard of care and support for pupils and improving its provision since the last inspection, the school's leaders have demonstrated that the school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing and in shape and space in mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils make consistent progress as they move through the school.
- Increase pupils' involvement in measuring their progress and improving their work.

- Develop the governors' first-hand knowledge about pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in Reception and the majority are on track to achieve the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. In the 2006 assessments, standards at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Girls were ahead of boys in reading and writing; in mathematics, results for boys and girls were similar. Over time, standards at the end of Year 2 have improved. Test results in 2006 at the end of Year 6 were above average in English and average in science and mathematics. Nearly a third of this year group joined the school other than at the usual times and this has impacted on the standards achieved. Girls reached higher standards than boys in English; results in mathematics and science were similar. Fewer pupils than expected reached the school's target in mathematics.

Robust analysis and checking is helping the school identify and address shortcomings in aspects of writing and mathematics, and where pupils' progress lacks consistency. Given their starting points when they joined the school the school's tracking information shows that pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress overall. Most are on track to meet their suitably challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and pupils looked after by the local authority make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils say their lessons are interesting, and that relationships with adults and each other are good. They are proud of the high standard of behaviour in the school. They are particularly pleased with the improvements to the playgrounds, including the 'playground buddies' for younger pupils. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue and that staff deal effectively and consistently with any problems. Pupils' understanding of how daily exercise and good eating habits help them to keep fit and well is becoming embedded. They have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding about keeping safe both in and out of school. Through the school council, pupils play an active part in the daily life of the school, including taking decisions about the use of their allocated budget. They enjoy charity fund-raising and taking part in sporting fixtures with other schools. Pupils work well with each other but their preparation for the world of work is satisfactory because standards in writing and mathematics are average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's evaluation that teaching and learning are good is accurate. Teachers plan effectively to meet the pupils' differing needs and manage their pupils well. Teaching assistants provide pupils needing extra help with good support and challenge. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and the effective use of interactive whiteboards supports pupils' learning. Time is generally used well and pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills and understanding. Occasionally, lesson introductions are too long and the focus for learning is not clear enough.

In the best lessons, teachers regularly check pupils' understanding with good questions and encourage pupils to measure their progress through discussions with their work partners and by reference to the lesson's learning goals. This practice is developing but is not yet consistent across the school. Similarly, in the most effective marking of pupils' work, teachers give pupils clear guidance about what they need to do to improve. Pupils say they find this advice very helpful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of curricular and other activities. Teachers have good regard for the national guidelines for the Foundation Stage, literacy and numeracy. They are successfully developing links between subjects and have recently introduced French for older pupils. The development of drama to help improve pupils' writing, together with the introduction of setting in Key Stage 2 for English and mathematics, are helping to improve standards but are these are still being embedded. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

The school's arrangements for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship are good and are reflected in the good and outstanding elements of their personal development. Pupils enjoy a good range of sporting activities, including basketball, tag rugby, cricket, football, netball and dance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of the school's care, guidance and support is good. Pupils say they would have no hesitation about turning to an adult for help in resolving a problem that was bothering them. Pupils joining the school other than at the usual times appreciate the 'buddy' system that helps them to settle down quickly. The school carries out appropriate checks on all adults who work with pupils and makes thorough risk assessments about its activities and visits. Staff are suitably trained in child protection matters.

New systems are enabling staff to keep a closer check on how pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are making progress. This information is helping them to target more accurately the necessary support at the right time to move pupils' learning on. This good practice is still being embedded. Good links with local secondary schools successfully support pupils' transition to the next stage of their education. The arrangements for supporting pupils looked after by the local authority are good. The school makes good provision for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, drawing on the expertise and experience of the school staff and outside agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is successfully developing the middle managers' role in analysing standards and progress and monitoring teaching and learning. Their recent participation in a national leadership programme is helping to sharpen leaders' skills in identifying and addressing areas for improvement. The staff team works well together. They benefit from good opportunities for professional development, especially through the school's

partnership with other providers. Induction arrangements for staff new to the school are good and teachers in training are well supported.

Day-to-day routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. Parents speak very well of the school and are pleased with how it responds to their children's needs. The school improvement plan clearly focuses on raising pupils' achievement with priorities carefully costed and evaluated. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings and fulfils all of its statutory duties. Its members bring a good range of experience and expertise to their work. They undertake training programmes and recognise that, to improve their role as the school's 'critical friend', they should improve their understanding of what and how pupils learn.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brightside Primary School, Billericay, Essex, CM12 0LE

Thank you very much for making me very welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed seeing your work in lessons and hearing about all the other interesting things you do in school. I particularly liked the many different ways in which you are learning to keep yourselves fit and healthy. I am delighted that you so enjoy coming to school and congratulate you on your good attendance. I also congratulate you on your excellent behaviour and how well aware you are of keeping yourselves safe. You make good progress during your time at Brightside Primary, although at times this is faster than at others. I have asked your teachers to look into this to make sure that you make good progress all the time. Your writing is improving now that you have regular drama lessons and you tell me that your understanding of shape and space in mathematics is getting better. I am asking your teachers to carry on with these to make sure the standards of your work keep rising. Teaching is good and you enjoy learning. I am pleased to see how well you get down to your work, and how you help each other.

The staff know you well and take good care of you. Most of you know your targets for improvement but some of you are not always sure how you are getting on and what you have to do to improve. In lessons where teachers regularly ask you to tell them how well you understand what you are learning, you are really honest in your answers. This is great because it helps them make sure you have extra help just when you need it. I am asking all your teachers to do this in future. Mrs Coles runs the school well. She and the staff have recently improved the way in which they check how well you are getting on. This is helping you to do better. The school governors want the very best for you. They tell me they would like to know more about what you are doing in lessons and how you learn. I think that is a great idea and I am sure you will do your best to help them find out.

You all have an important part to play in helping the school improve further. Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead Inspector