

# Brinkley Grove Primary School

## Inspection report

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|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 131219             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | ESSEX LA           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 315756             |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 21 February 2008   |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Gulshanbir Kayembe |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Foundation  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 396   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Hugh Thomas  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Gillian Jasper  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 24 March 2003   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Rawlings Crescent<br>Colchester<br>Colchester<br>Essex<br>CO4 4GF |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01206 852266  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01206 844789  |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. This inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The progress in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics, especially for girls, and the impact of pupil mobility on overall performance.
- The effectiveness of teaching and curricular provision for different groups of pupils and the impact on their progress.
- The extent to which the roles of subject leaders have been developed and the impact they have on standards and progress in their areas.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and children during lunch; talking to pupils and staff; checking the school's record of lesson observations as well as assessment and pupil progress records, and analysing the results of questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school serves a very mixed catchment in Colchester with areas of significant disadvantage. This is reflected in the above average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. On entry to the Foundation Stage, children's skills and experiences are below those expected for their age, and particularly low in literacy. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities or statements of special educational need. A high proportion of pupils leave or join the school after the start of the Reception year. Although the majority of pupils are White British, the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than usual and a relatively high proportion of pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Most of these pupils join the school midway through their primary education.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils enabling them to achieve well. A positive and caring ethos contributes in no small measure to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Those joining the school midway through their primary education usually settle in quickly because of the friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Staff are skilled at integrating new pupils with the minimum of fuss or adverse impact on learning. Nonetheless, high pupil mobility has a significant impact on the school, especially when large numbers join a particular class or year group at the same time.

Children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Good teaching and a good curriculum ensures that pupils continue to make good progress through Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are well planned with clear learning intentions. Activities are well structured, although pupils are sometimes asked to think about too many things at once. Questioning is good and behaviour well managed. Occasionally, the pace of learning is a little slow because introductions are overlong and some pupils become a little restless. Even so, teaching meets the varied needs of pupils well.

Standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Progress is good in English throughout the school, although spelling is not always strong. In addition, writing is not as imaginative as it might be and this limits attainment at the higher levels in national tests and assessments. However, increased use of drama and film is helping pupils to think more creatively, and to use more interesting and varied vocabulary. Pupils joining the school as beginners in English make rapid progress in learning to speak the language. They often do particularly well in mathematics and science. Overall, progress in mathematics is satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in learning basic mathematical skills but weaknesses in solving problems and applying new skills hinder better progress. In contrast, pupils make very good progress in science where standards are a little above average by the end of Year 6. The good emphasis on experimental and investigative work contributes well both to pupils' learning and their enjoyment in science.

Boys tend to outperform girls. The school's good curriculum is 'boy-friendly' and meets boys' needs well. However, in making the curriculum so accessible to boys, the needs of all girls are not always fully taken into account. In addition, girls sometimes lack confidence, especially in mathematics. Nonetheless, the generally good progress pupils make in basic literacy, information and communication technology and most aspects of numeracy, as well as good development of social skills, mean they are well prepared for future life.

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to participate in all that it has to offer. Whilst most attend regularly, a few have poor attendance which the school works hard to rectify. It draws on its good links with external agencies and partners to support parents and pupils in improving attendance. Behaviour is good and contributes well to a positive learning environment. In the best lessons, pupils' behaviour and attention are exemplary. Overall, pupils gain in self-confidence as they move through the school, establishing meaningful relationships with adults and other pupils. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they make a positive contribution to the local and wider community. Pupils have good understanding of healthy lifestyles and most are making good efforts to adopt these. They demonstrated their understanding of safety exceptionally well in their calm and orderly response to the fire alarm.

Pupils are well looked after and confident about sharing any concerns with staff. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Support staff make a strong contribution to the school's work. In particular, they provide good help for pupils with learning difficulties, enabling them to make good progress. The school has established the use of targets in literacy and numeracy to support learning. However, pupils are not always sure about what their targets are. This, combined with inconsistent use of written comments when work is marked, means pupils are not entirely sure about how to improve their work.

The success of the school owes much to good leadership and management. The headteacher has established a clear sense of common purpose and works very effectively in partnership with her deputy to identify and address key priorities. Their monitoring of the school's work is very thorough and results in accurate self-evaluation. Subject leaders provide sound oversight of their areas. Their roles in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are developing well and this is having a positive impact on improving standards. Governors provide a clear strategic steer to the school's work and keep a close check on its progress. Hence, capacity to improve is good. Parents value the work of the school and are positive about its impact on their children. The school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children do well to reach standards that are close to those expected for children of this age by the end of the Foundation Stage. Although standards remain low in literacy, they make good progress in this area. Average and high attaining children in particular make good strides in their learning. New approaches to teaching letters and sounds are having a good impact on children's learning and accelerating their progress. As with the rest of the school, progress is slower in numeracy. Teaching is good and strong emphasis is placed on children's personal development. They learn to take turns and share resources. A good curriculum ensures that all areas of learning are covered. The outdoor area is well used, especially to promote physical development. Children are well cared for and supported and the Foundation Stage is well led and managed.

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

- Develop pupils' skills in problem solving to improve their progress in mathematics.
- Ensure that the curriculum fully meets the needs of girls and enables them to feel more confident about their work.
- Ensure that pupils know and understand their targets and what to do to improve their work.

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## 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   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 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 | 2 |

### 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 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 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

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brinkley Grove Primary School, Colchester, CO4 9GF

I enjoyed visiting your school, and talking to you as well as watching you work. Your quick and very grown-up response to the fire alarm was impressive. I would like to thank you for making me feel welcome. The school gives you a good education and prepares you well for your next school.

These are some of the best things about the school.

- You enjoy school and behave well.
- The school is good at helping new pupils settle in who join from other schools.
- Children in Reception get a good start to their education.
- During your time at school, you learn a lot and make good progress.
- There are many interesting things for you to do after school, as well as during school time, and these enable you to develop good personal qualities.
- Teaching is good and promotes your learning well.
- Staff take good care of you and help you with your work.
- Your headteacher makes sure the school pays good attention to your needs and she is well supported by other staff.

There are a few things that need to be improved.

- Improving your skills in solving problems in mathematics.
- Making sure that girls make as good progress as boys in their learning.
- Ensuring that you know what your targets are in literacy and numeracy and what you need to do to achieve them.

It was very nice to meet you and I wish you well for the future.

Yours truly

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead inspector