

Brighstone Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118192
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	326781
Inspection date	29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	79
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Hibberd
Headteacher	Mrs L Cahill
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	New Road Brighstone Newport PO30 4BB
Telephone number	01983 740285

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	29 April 2009
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Fax number

01983 741224

Age group 4-9

Inspection date 29 April 2009

Inspection number 326781

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects.

- What has been the impact of the school's support for improving writing skills?
- How well do children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make progress across all areas of learning?
- Are strengths in the school's approach to personal development and well-being sufficient to justify an outstanding judgement?

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector 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

Brighstone Primary is a small voluntary aided school which draws its pupils from a wide rural catchment area. There is a privately managed provision for pre-school children in the school grounds. The school manages provision for after school activities which extend the school day to 17.30 hours. Pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has achieved the Enhanced Healthy School and Active Cooking Awards (2008) as well as a number of other awards and accreditations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brighstone is a good school. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The introduction of a creative project-based curriculum motivates pupils to apply their basic skills well in a wide range of active learning activities. Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Improvements owe much to a charismatic headteacher who has the strong support of teachers, support staff, pupils and parents. In addition, a passionate and very effective governing body ensure that this small school continues to play a significant role in both the local and the wider national and international communities. A parent writes, 'Brighstone is a lively, vibrant, caring school which has given my children a fantastic grounding - both academically and socially'.

Achievement is good. Overall, children enter the Foundation Stage with basic skills which are broadly typical for their age and leave school at the end of Year 4 with standards that are above average. The overall trend in attainment and in pupils' progress has fluctuated over recent years but reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 showed a significant improvement in 2007 and 2008. There is good evidence that this is being sustained in the current academic year. Contributory factors include a higher proportion of good teaching, underpinned by good assessment systems which enable teachers and support assistants to respond quickly to individual learning needs. This approach is raising the performance at all levels of pupils ability in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The school has rightly prioritised raising writing standards and has introduced a number of intervention strategies, including small-group teaching. Much has been achieved already but teachers recognise that standards in writing are not yet in line with other skills. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are eager learners. They are very well motivated by imaginative lesson plans that encourage them to broaden their understanding of the world around them. Older pupils met in the local churchyard to listen to a history of smuggling in Brighstone. A storyteller told them how smuggled goods such as brandy were often hidden in the very graves around them. Later, led by a local ex-customs and excise officer, pupils role-played as smugglers. The project made an exciting impact on their learning and on their classwork. All projects and themes have a good external input from the wider community. Support assistants work very closely and effectively in partnership with teachers and thereby enable pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress.

The curriculum is outstanding because it is innovative and brings together the pastoral and academic interests of pupils. A high proportion of pupils participate and enjoy taking part in music, the arts and physical activities such as 'hip-hop' dance. The rich environment for learning in the countryside around the school provides scope for further extending pupils' knowledge and understanding. The theme 'Out of this World' combined classroom study with a great outdoor adventure. Pupils talked animatedly of how they joined a local astronomy society at 10 o'clock at night on nearby Brighstone Downs to closely observe the stars and the moon by telescope. A parent writes, 'My child loves the extra activities and the school always involves everyone'.

Pupils really enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. Bullying is rare but should it occur pupils are confident such incidents will be dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school. Attendance is above average and the proportion of persistent absentees is well below average. Relationships are excellent. A pupil stated, 'We really help one another'. There is an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Examples include 'walking Wednesdays'

and the enthusiastic gardening club led by two parents. Produce is entered in the village horticultural show each year and provides seasonal crops for lunchtime on a commercial basis. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements are interwoven very successfully across learning activities. The morning assembly celebrated the achievement of the school cook who had walked up Snowdon the previous weekend. The question and answer session gave pupils a greater depth of understanding of many values such as perseverance and determination. The school Eco Council is very active and their decisions reflect mature discussion. For example, they carefully researched and compared wood chips and rubber tyre shreds for the play area before deciding on the latter. The school makes a positive contribution to working with local businesses and community clubs and events. The formal after school club is well organised onsite and provides an additional support for parents.

Care, support and guidance are good. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and the school provides a very safe environment. Parental response is overwhelmingly positive. Leadership and management are good overall and teachers are developing good skills with the support of senior staff. The school has good capacity to improve and sustain over time the current improvements in pupils' achievement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with age-related expectations in most areas of learning. However, in some aspects such as writing, linking sounds and letters, calculation and space, shape and measure, their attainment on entry is lower than that generally expected for their age. Effective organisation and teamwork enable all children to make good progress in all areas of learning and most achieve in line with the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception class. Personal, social and emotional development is outstanding because of the supportive, warm and caring relationships between adults and children. All children work and play together well, sharing ideas and equipment. The excellent provision made for their welfare through links with parents, other providers and agencies, enables children to settle in quickly and they enjoy their time in school. On occasions, adults miss opportunities to support and extend children's learning and development during their free play activities. Overall, management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and leadership skills of the staff are developing well.

What the school should do to improve further

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, make free play activities more effective by offering appropriate support and challenge to extend children's learning and development
- Extend and build on initiatives to raise achievement in writing.

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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
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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brighstone Church of England Aided Primary School, Newport, PO30 4BB

We really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you very much for the friendly way you welcomed us and for your help in finding out about your school. We think yours is a good school and everybody who works there tries hard to help you to do well.

You and your parents told us that you enjoy school and that you feel safe and well cared for. Your headteacher, teachers and all adults in the school make sure that you work and play together in such a friendly way and make the school successful.

There were lots of highlights during our visit.

- We were impressed with your behaviour and how keen you are to learn.
- You make good progress in your classwork.
- We liked the morning assembly very much because it took place in a lively, positive family atmosphere. We agree with you that the school cook had shown great perseverance and determination to get to the top of Mount Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales. In Welsh it is known as 'Yr Wyddfa'.
- We would have liked to be with those of you who went up on Brighstone Downs to study the stars and the moon at night. It must have been 'Out of this World'. We hope you will continue to enjoy your projects on this and many other topics, such as smuggling.
- You take on responsibilities very well. For example, the Eco Council's decision on whether wood chips or shredded tyres were best for the play area was very thoughtful and well argued.

We know that all of you are very keen to do even better at your work. So we have asked your teachers, with your help, to do two things. First, to continue to think of ways to improve your writing even more, we saw some good examples of your work during our visit. Second, we have asked the school to help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their thinking skills even further.

Thank you once again for being so helpful to us.

With very best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector