

Briary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118520
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326842
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Richard Blackmore

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	348
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	David Stanley
Headteacher	Ben Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greenhill Road Herne Bay CT6 7RS
Telephone number	01227 373095
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this above average sized school are from White British backgrounds. A small percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These pupils' needs are varied. They include specific learning difficulties and a small number of complex needs. There is a breakfast and after-school club run by the school, and an independent nursery on the school site. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provides for four- and five-year-old children, taught in two Reception classes. The school has gained the Active Mark, Healthy Schools status and has the Eco-School Green Flag.

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 school. It is a highly inclusive and nurturing environment and the headteacher and staff go out of their way to make sure everyone can take part in all the school has to offer and to ensure pupils make the most of their time in school. 'Briary is very much a family school,' is a written comment that typifies the overwhelming majority of parents' exceptionally positive views of the school.

Pupils achieve well from starting points which are generally below expectations and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Leaders recognise that progress in writing is slower. They have implemented a plan to improve this key skill and are already seeing positive results. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress benefiting from the sensitive support provided by skilled assistants.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding, as is evident from their good behaviour in classrooms and around the school, with one commenting, 'this school is as good as it can get'. Pupils are very polite, well mannered and responsible, demonstrating, through the choices that they make, a high level of understanding the difference between right and wrong. Social skills are strengthened through the numerous and well-managed opportunities to work together in lessons and pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils relish the challenge to be active members of the community both in school and locally, readily joining the school council where they are active in supporting worthwhile causes such as cleaning Hampton beach. Attendance is improving but remains only satisfactory due to term time holidays.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The best lessons, which account for about a third of all lessons, are dynamic events, with high calibre interventions by teaching assistants and technology which are used well to engage pupils. Relationships, built on valuing pupils as individuals, and effective use of resources make lessons interesting and enable all pupils to make good progress. This success encourages pupils to gain skills and apply them in a range of subjects.

The school provides a wide variety of curriculum experiences, including a strong programme of personal, social and health education which successfully promotes pupils' emotional health. This makes an important contribution to pupils' good personal development. Planning of the curriculum is extended exceptionally well by many very popular and well attended clubs. Pupils say they particularly like the many different activities, including netball and ballroom dancing. These contribute to pupils' excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives.

Pastoral care and support are significant strengths of the school. A strong team of dedicated pastoral staff know the pupils well. Pupils enjoy friendships and the way teachers make learning fun and interesting. They say they feel safe and secure and they know they are very well cared for because of the way they are talked to and involved in school life. The Ark, which is a central area where pupils can go if they are struggling in the classroom, is much valued by pupils as being a place that 'makes you happy', as one said. Nonetheless, opportunities to reinforce targets and help pupils understand how to improve their work are sometimes missed in marking, which is regular but uneven in its quality.

Leadership and management are good. The effective self-evaluation by senior leaders has provided an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement, and effective strategies to secure these have been adopted. Leaders at all levels set well-chosen

priorities, and action plans focus on strategies to address where the school performs less well. There have been important improvements made since the last inspection and, as a result, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good, with some outstanding features. Children make good progress, particularly in developing communication skills and in basic mathematical skills, and achieve well in Reception from lower than expected starting points, although there is some variation year on year. The outstanding promotion of children's welfare is at the heart of this very caring setting, which is well led and managed. Staff relentlessly focus on identifying and placing first the needs of individual children, ensuring that adults have a very clear understanding of how well children are doing and what they need to do to develop further. Planning is based on first-hand observations of children's current achievements and outcomes from ongoing assessment. This helps children's personal development to be outstanding and they quickly grow in confidence. Children make friends quickly, follow instructions carefully and behave well. Adult-led activities are suitably balanced with opportunities for children to learn independently. An engaging activity, involving singing and discussing the growing number of Chinese lanterns in the outdoor classroom, helped children to progress quickly towards understanding number order. Although used well, the outdoor area is insufficiently developed to continuously provide a stimulating area for learning and development. Children's welfare is continually and outstandingly promoted through the care that adults show for them daily.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance rates by discouraging parents from taking holidays in term time.
- Ensure teachers' marking consistently makes pupils aware of how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation stage get off to a good start and make good progress towards the early learning goals. As a result of recently introduced initiatives directed more rigorously towards helping pupils make good progress, there has been a whole-school focus on improving basic skills. This has started in writing and, as a consequence, standards in English have risen. The school has developed a similar strategy for mathematics, and current assessments and inspection evidence show that the previously seen low standards in mathematics and English are successfully being tackled. Standards are now broadly average by the time pupils leave, with the school well on the way to achieving their challenging 2009 end of Key Stage 2 targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Excellent pastoral care means pupils are very happy, show developing independence and confidently complete tasks. Pupils readily take advantage of all the school offers and are proud to be school councillors, house captains and trained peer mediators. Their good attitudes and basic skills prepare them well for their next stage of education. They show an excellent awareness of how to keep healthy and safe; over two thirds participate in some 26 extra-curricular activities from 'wake up to sport' to Latin. They make healthy choices, and many participated in 'The

chance to shine' initiative which led to cricket coaching. They are keen environmentalists, reflected in the school's Eco-School award and are involved with the local community; they visit senior citizens and exhibit work in Herne Bay museum and gallery. Pupils have a good understanding of people from different cultures and backgrounds abroad, through visits, email and letter contacts with their twinned school in Wimereux, France, their G8 Conference links, and 'Send your Buddy to School' in Kenya.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to ensure that any pupils finding work difficult receive additional help to keep up with the pace of learning. High expectations and challenging questions and explanations contribute to pupils' good progress in lessons seen. Pupils are encouraged to work independently, and also cooperatively, sometimes supporting pupils from other year groups. Literacy and numeracy targets known by pupils and teachers have increasingly made individuals aware of what they should try to achieve in future work, but little reflection of this is evident in marking of work and this limits rates of improvement. Some planning does not always take enough account of the different stages of development, resulting in the level of challenge for all pupils not always being sufficiently high and this sometimes slows progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad and rich curriculum in which basic skills are covered well whilst still giving a good emphasis to computer work, physical education and modern foreign languages. The curriculum provides a good basis for personal, social and health education. Less well established are innovative ways to ensure writing is developed across all subjects and embedded as part of different curriculum projects. Pupils benefit from the school's good facilities for information and communication technology. The recent introduction of strategies delivered through a range of curriculum areas has improved progress and led to rising standards. Pupils speak highly of visits, for example to the Houses of Parliament as they bring learning to life. Visitors who discuss issues such as fair trade further enrich pupils' experiences. The school grounds also provide a valuable learning resource through growing a range of vegetables and plants and enhance pupils' understanding of the importance of conserving water.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good transition arrangements for those joining, leaving or moving up through the school ensure that pupils quickly settle and teachers have a full picture of their needs. The Ark provides high levels of pastoral support and is a stepping stone for those who can cope with school but not quite with class. The school demonstrates excellent inclusiveness and is prepared to 'go the extra mile' to support learners. Specialist literacy and numeracy support and breakfast and after-school clubs all significantly support pupils' development. Pupils, especially those with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, are well supported. The excellent partnerships with parents and external groups such as family liaison officers benefit pupils and their families. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Pupils know and understand their personal academic

targets in their 'monkey books' and these are regularly reviewed and updated. Notwithstanding the lack of incisive marking, these targets make a positive contribution to pupils' progress. Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and his 'make things happen' approach sets a very clear direction for the school. He maintains high expectations for standards and the quality of provision, ensuring rigour and pace to improvements, for example assessment procedures, which has speeded up progress. Middle managers make a good contribution to the school's overall leadership and management. However, although monitoring of lessons is timetabled, it does not precisely focus enough on learning and the improvements in pupils' knowledge and skills. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's priorities, supporting the school with commitment, and challenging when necessary. Their effective use of challenging targets is raising standards and achievement. The school contributes particularly well to community cohesion at the local level but is aware of the need to further develop pupils' understanding of different lifestyles across the country.

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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?	1
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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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 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

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Briary Primary School, Herne Bay CT6 7RS

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and you all helped us get to know your school really quickly. Your school gives you a good education. It helps you make good progress because the teaching and curriculum are good. Here are some of the highlights of your school.

- Children in the Reception classes settle quickly to school and learn well.
- You make good progress.
- You really know how to keep healthy and safe.
- You have a good variety of clubs to take part in.
- You make a positive contribution to the school and local community.
- You have very good relationships with each other and the staff.
- You very much enjoy school.
- You are well looked after.
- Your activities and tasks are made interesting by the teachers.

I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do two things to make your school even better. Firstly, to encourage all of you to attend school as often as possible. Secondly, to make sure teachers' marking of your work shows you how to make your work better.

You can help too by coming to school as often as you can and letting teachers know if you do not understand how to improve your work.

Best wishes for the future.

Richard Blackmore

Lead inspector