

Brightlingsea Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114758
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338440
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Sycamore
Headteacher	Claire Claydon
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2007
School address	Eastern Road Brightlingsea Colchester
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by nine different teachers. Meetings were held with staff, the chair of the governing body and a group of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, checked arrangements for safeguarding and scrutinised a range of documentation including development plans and records of progress. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised, along with 102 completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the standards reached, and progress made, by all groups of pupils in the current academic year
- the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve standards in mathematics and in improving pupils' achievement consistently
- the impact of the quality of teaching on pupils' learning
- the impact of the school's action in improving the attainment and progress of girls and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average and so is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school has been awarded Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which has improved significantly since the last inspection. It provides a positive learning environment where pupils enjoy learning and feel very safe and secure. Pupils develop good personal and social skills and grow up as confident learners as a result of the well-organised and effective care, guidance and support systems. Most parents and carers say that they are happy about their children's experience in the purposeful and supportive environment of the school. Comments such as: 'Our experience has been very positive; my child thoroughly enjoys school,' and: 'I feel that the school has improved significantly over the past three years; the topic based approach to curriculum has enabled my child to be more interested and creative in his work,' confirm their confidence in the school.

Pupils achieve well. The rigorous and thorough tracking of pupils' progress demonstrates that all groups of pupils are now making consistently good progress. As a result, standards have improved, especially in mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving average standards in English and mathematics; this maintains a trend of improvement in mathematics over the past two years.

Good quality teaching, together with good curriculum, ensures that pupils make good progress as they move up the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work: they are continually seeking ways to enhance pupils' learning experiences and assess pupils' understanding and progress effectively. However, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to ensure that they consistently achieve as well as they can. Planning for links between subjects is developing well because of the effective introduction of initiatives. However, planning for activities to raise pupils' awareness of different cultures is not fully developed. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always guide pupils' understanding of how to improve. In mathematics, individual targets are not set consistently to ensure that pupils evaluate their own progress.

The reason for the improvements lies in the successful teamwork of the headteacher and staff. The headteacher and the senior leaders, in collaboration with other staff, have put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation system to raise standards in all areas of the school's work. The performance of individuals and groups of pupils is closely monitored, and the data is used effectively to track pupils' progress and set challenging targets. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in higher achievement across the school. The school has good links with various organisations within the local community. An action plan for community cohesion has been put in place and is being implemented, but pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is limited. Self-evaluation is good and provides a secure basis for development

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planning. The governing body knows the school well and has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The impact of the new strategies in improving the school's work indicates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - providing work that includes sufficiently challenging activities to enable more able pupils to achieve as well as they can
 - using marking to guide pupils to understand how to improve
 - setting individual targets consistently in mathematics.
- Enhance pupils' cultural awareness by:
 - providing planned activities within the curriculum
 - promoting community cohesion beyond the school community in order to deepen pupils' understanding of their place in the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The analysis of the current assessment results, scrutiny of pupils' work and observations of lessons during the inspection indicate that all groups of pupils have made good progress consistently in reading, writing and mathematics over the past year, and are achieving average standards in the national tests in all these subjects. There have been some fluctuations in the national test results in mathematics until 2008 while standards in English remained average over the past two years. Rigorous tracking of the progress of individual pupils and carefully targeted intervention strategies have now ensured a marked improvement in mathematics. As a result, standards in mathematics are now securely in line with the national average and a good proportion of pupils are now achieving the higher levels. Standards in English continue to be in line with the national average with an increasing proportion of pupils achieving higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress because of the effective individual support. Girls and boys achieve equally well. Pupils write for different purposes and are increasingly applying their writing skills across the curriculum successfully. In mathematics, they enjoy investigative work and apply their numeracy skills well to solve practical problems.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school; this is evident from their above average attendance. Pupils say they feel very safe at all times and are confident that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. They behave well and this is making a good contribution to their rising achievement. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and take part eagerly in a wide range of sporting activities. They are keen to undertake responsibilities through their work for the school council and carry these out responsibly. They are well involved in their local community, with various fundraising taking place for charities. Pupils successfully apply their basic skills to a

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range of purposes and are well placed to continue their education. The work on the 'Money Project' by pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrates their understanding of business enterprise skills in designing and marketing products they made. Pupils have a good sense of morality and their social skills are well developed. However, their knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity in Britain and that of the wider world are not sufficiently developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a range of activities that interest and engage pupils in their learning. They are skilled in keeping track of pupils' progress in learning through focused questioning and by providing ongoing feedback. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, the brisk pace and challenging questioning ensured that all groups of pupils understood the properties of cuboids, and how they can be used for designing. Good relationships provide a secure learning environment that enables pupils to make good progress. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to stimulate pupils' imagination and to ensure their active involvement in learning. This

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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was seen in a literacy lesson where pupils learnt about the persuasive feature of advertisements. However, in a minority of lessons more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and, as a result, they do not achieve as well as they can. Teaching assistants are skilful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always suggest how work might be improved. Pupils know their targets in English but targets in mathematics are not set consistently enough.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal and social development and their enjoyment of learning. The school has made good progress in developing a thematic and creative curriculum and promoting appropriate cross-curricular links. However, planning for developing pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is less well developed. The introduction of 'Big Write' and the 'Domino Project' are contributing well to improving standards in English and mathematics. A good range of activities such as clubs, visits and residential trips enriches pupils' learning experience well.

The school provides good pastoral support for all its pupils and its good links with the external agencies strengthen the pastoral system continually. The support and care arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Carefully targeted interventions for vulnerable groups are very well supported through a whole school approach and through dedicated support assistants. The arrangements for transferring children between the classes within the school, as well as between the infant and the secondary schools, are well organised and effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders, supported by other staff and the governing body, have secured significant improvement in all areas of the school's work since the last inspection. There is a common sense of purpose and morale is high. The headteacher, assisted by her senior leaders, has strengthened the assessment and monitoring system which is driving improvement at various levels. This ensures continuity and consistency in analysing data and tracking progress for individual pupils. The termly 'Raising Attainment Plans' programme ensures rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and, consequently, standards are rising. Rigorous performance management arrangements mean that teachers are developing their management skills effectively and are playing an increasing role in leading improvement. Members of the governing body use their

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expertise successfully to provide good support to staff and are fully involved in planning and evaluating all aspects of the school's work. They have ensured robust safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding policies are implemented effectively and staff are well trained.

The school is highly committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils and this has ensured improvement in the performance of different groups of pupils. The school has worked hard to involve parents and carers in their children's education: this is beginning to have a positive impact, as was evident from the high rate of attendance at the parents' evening during the inspection. The school is very successful in liaising with outside agencies and local schools, and this supports pupils' learning and well-being effectively. The school actively promotes community cohesion within the local community but its engagement with the wider community is limited. Senior leaders recognise that this is an area for development. The school manages its budget efficiently and provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaires were very pleased with their children's experience in this school. The vast majority appreciate that the school keeps their children very safe and supports them to adopt healthy lifestyles. A very small minority raised concerns about the management of behaviour and their children's progress. The inspection team found that the school has succeeded in improving behaviour and that it is now good. The behaviour of individual children with

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social and emotional needs is managed well so that it rarely leads to the disruption of lessons. The team found that improvements to the effectiveness of the school owe much to the dedicated and successful leadership of the senior leaders.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brightlingsea Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 331 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	44	52	51	4	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	59	42	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	38	52	51	10	10	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	29	58	57	10	10	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	29	64	63	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	28	57	56	11	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	36	61	60	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	35	60	59	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	28	59	58	8	8	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	21	62	61	13	13	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	26	61	60	4	4	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	27	26	58	57	11	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	37	52	51	9	9	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 July 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Brightlingsea Junior School, Colchester, CO7 0HU

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We enjoyed talking with you and it was good to see how much you enjoy lessons and all the extra activities. You told us that Brightlingsea Junior is a good school and we agree.

These are the things that we found were particularly good.

You work hard in lessons and make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and to lead a healthy lifestyle.

You behave well, are keen to take responsibilities and carry them out successfully to help the school to run smoothly.

You work well together to get involved in your school council meetings and in making decisions.

Teachers and other adults help you to learn well and find lots of interesting work for you to do.

All the adults have your best interests at heart and take good care of you. You know that the adults will help you if you have any problems.

Your headteacher, teachers and other staff are doing a very good job in running your school and are always trying to make further improvements.

We have suggested that these are the things which they need to do now.

Teachers are going to make sure that you are always set challenging work to do so that you do even better.

Teachers will set targets in mathematics so that you know what to do to improve your work further.

The school will help you extend your understanding of the similarities and differences between different communities by finding out about people elsewhere in Britain and making links abroad.

You can help by doing your best and continuing to take good care of each other, so that

your school continues to be a happy place.

Thank you again for your help and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti

Lead inspector

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