

# Brightside Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132164
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	341298
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	370
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Worricker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Isabel Unite
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Brightside Billericay Essex
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They looked at samples of pupils' work, analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school improvement plans, risk assessments, governors' minutes and the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 107 parents and carers.

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

- whether pupils of all abilities are being helped to make consistent progress in English, mathematics and science throughout the school
- how teachers use their assessments to plan lessons and to show pupils what they need to do to improve their work
- the way in which support staff are deployed
- the impact of leaders' and governors' monitoring and the measures they have taken to drive school improvement.

## Information about the school

This school is much larger than average. Most pupils are of White British origin. Only a few pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The headteacher took up her post in April 2008. Brightside has an Activemark award.

**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

'We feel the school nurtures and cares for all its pupils. The headteacher knows all the pupils by name and even knows their personalities. All the children seem very content and have learnt to be kind and respectful to their peers. Our son becomes very disappointed if he wakes up and it is not a school day!' This comment from a parent encapsulates how well Brightside lives up to its aims, summed up in the acronym 'LEARN': Listen, Enjoy, Achieve, Respect, Nurture.

The good progress that pupils make in lessons is due in no small part to the way the school promotes and encourages their positive attitudes to learning. Throughout the school, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and they take part in activities with enthusiasm. Pupils behave well and they are quick to offer answers to teachers' questions. They are also keen to volunteer as helpers, with many of the older pupils, for example, taking the responsibility of coming in to school early to help set up morning activities. They explain that they enjoy school so much because their teachers give them things to do that make learning fun. There are many good opportunities to practise and develop key literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics, but sometimes an overreliance on worksheets, for example in science, limits the scope for pupils to write and present information in their own words. There is much good marking that helps pupils to move their work on, but this is not consistent in every class. The targets that pupils have in each class do not usually relate enough to pupils' individual learning needs.

A strength of the school is the way it carefully tracks each pupil's progress and puts extra support in place for those who need it. This particularly boosts the progress and learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils benefit from tailored support from teaching assistants when working individually or in small groups, but teachers do not always deploy their support staff to such good effect during whole-class teaching. Pupils make the fastest progress in lessons where they are given varied, practical activities. Progress is sometimes slower in lessons where introductions are over-long and at the expense of time for pupils to do things for themselves. Teachers' do not always make the best use of assessment to match work in lessons to pupils' different capabilities. For example, sometimes the work in lessons does not challenge the more able pupils enough, and that has been a contributory factor in relatively few pupils attaining higher levels in the Year 2 tests. Nevertheless, boys and girls of all abilities achieve well and they go on to attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. They do not just do well in English, mathematics and science; the rich curriculum gives them plenty of opportunities to learn in other subjects too. In Year 6, for example, pupils have the chance to learn some rudimentary German and Spanish, as

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well as the French taught from the start of Year 3. The pupils are especially enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs on offer, including some run in partnership with outside agencies. Parents recognise the benefits of what is provided for their children. As one explained, 'Class teaching and extra-curricular activities have helped my children to grow in confidence and ability.'

The good relationships throughout the school help to make it a happy place to be. Pupils work constructively together, they are polite, and they treat each other with respect. They also develop a great appreciation of the diversity of their own and other's cultural heritages. Throughout the school, the walls are alive with examples of pupils' imaginative artwork emulating the style of a host of different Western artists. The stimulating learning environment contributes to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and helps to nurture pupils' thirst for learning. However, the pride pupils take in their school is not always matched by a similar pride in the presentation of their work. Sometimes good quality work is let down by untidy presentation and because pupils take insufficient care with their handwriting and spelling.

The school is successful in achieving its aims because it is well run. Self-evaluation is accurate, based on keen monitoring and sharply focused on identifying where improvements can be made. For instance, analysis of pupils' progress has resulted in changes to the way in which pupils are taught in Key Stage 1 and have helped to iron out uneven progress through the school. Examples such as this demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement. The school has correctly identified that, though improving, the start that children get off to in the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been as rapid as it could be. Although the children are well looked after and make reasonable progress, they are not challenged enough to think for themselves. Several governors are new to their roles. They are supportive of the school and challenge leaders appropriately over standards and achievement, but they have not been rigorous enough in making sure appropriate independent health and safety checks are carried out and ensuring that risk assessments are comprehensive and fully up-to-date.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By the end of the summer term 2010, further accelerate the progress that pupils make in lessons by
  - matching work to the different abilities of the pupils in each class so that the most able pupils are always challenged and extended
  - making full use of teaching assistants during the time in lessons when teachers are talking to the whole class
  - always giving pupils varied activities and tasks and not allowing lesson introductions to go on for too long
  - raising expectations of the presentation of pupils' work and the accuracy of

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their spelling

- ensuring that all pupils have sharply focused targets and that all marking gives them clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- By the start of the autumn term 2010, help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach higher standards by regularly planning activities for each child that develop their creativity through problem-solving that challenges them to think for themselves.
- As a matter of urgency, put in place arrangements for governors to make sure appropriate independent health and safety checks are carried out and to ensure that all risk assessments for the site are comprehensive and kept up-to-date.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils make good progress in lessons and they learn and achieve well, both in lessons and over their time at the school, attaining above average standards by the end of Year 6. Their above average attendance rates also contribute to the good progress they make over time. Pupils are now making faster progress in Key Stage 1 than has been the case in the past, thanks to revisions to the curriculum and the focus on teaching letters and sounds as a way of improving literacy and writing skills. Parents are mostly happy with the progress their children make, but there are some who feel they could be doing better. As one parent explained, 'I feel my child's progress could be improved if she was pushed a little harder.' There are certainly occasions where more able pupils, in particular, do not move forward as fast as they could because the work does not challenge them enough. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make consistently good progress because they benefit from well-targeted support.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very evident in their rapidly increasing confidence and self-esteem, their thoughtful attitudes and the very good relationships throughout the school. They embrace with very great enthusiasm the many opportunities they have for taking responsibility within the school and wider community. For example, by initiating activities to support their chosen charities and through the energy saving week organised by the school council.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

A parent observed that, 'The teachers are so full of energy and enthusiasm'; inspectors agree. Their enthusiasm is infectious and it is picked up by the pupils. The good relationships that staff have with their pupils helps to motivate them to work hard and do their best because they are eager to please. Lessons start with teachers setting out the 'learning objective', although sometimes these focus too much on the task to be completed rather than what it is that the pupils should be learning. Particularly in English, pupils have success criteria against which they themselves measure how well they are doing. This opportunity to look critically at their own and each other's writing and other work is contributing to their good progress. Learning is made enjoyable because of the imaginative links made between subjects, so that work in, for example, history also draws on and helps to develop pupils' literacy skills. Opportunities for writing can be limited, however, when pupils are given templates or unchallenging worksheets on which to record their work. The targets that pupils have are based on the most important area for improvement identified for the whole class, for example in the use of connectives in writing sentences. This means that, for pupils who are already more confident in that aspect, the targets have limited relevance.

Pupils and their parents confirm the good quality of the care and support provided for them. A stand out feature of the school is the work done to support parents of children joining the Early Years Foundation Stage through the 'Flying Start' course which runs over a ten-week period. Leaders have reviewed and adapted the course, offering a shorter version for those parents for whom it is difficult to commit for a full ten weeks. Many parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities wrote to praise

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the way their child had been helped. One explained, 'We have an action plan in place and the improvement in every area of learning has been amazing. I am eternally grateful to his teacher and the school for everything they have done for my child.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

'I have been struck by the warm, caring environment at Brightside and how smoothly the school runs.' This comment from a parent was typical of the many who wrote to convey their praise for the way the headteacher and leadership team had succeeded in creating a positive climate for learning throughout the school. Their rigorous monitoring has given them an accurate picture both of what the school does well and of where things could be better, and it has helped them to push through improvements that have had a measurable impact in accelerating pupils' progress. The school works hard to involve, inform and engage with parents, and this is appreciated by them. One parent contrasted their experience at Brightside with the bland assurances they had experienced in other schools: 'I am glad that here they tell you the problems and have solutions.'

Pupils learn about their own and other's cultures, and this contributes to the way the school works as a harmonious community. They take a growing interest in the environment and the wider world. The good promotion of equal opportunities is evident in the way both boys and girls are fully involved in activities and in how pupils with additional learning needs, including those with physical disabilities, are helped to join in to the full. Nonetheless, a parent raised a valid concern as an equality issue, complaining that Mother's Day was celebrated, with pupils encouraged to make gifts, but there was no mention of Father's Day!

Governors are supportive of the school. Some, including the chair, are new to their roles, and they are in the process of revising the way in which they organise their oversight. They have ensured that safeguarding measures meet legal requirements. Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of all adults and risk assessments are in place, but governors are dependent on staff for much of their information and do not make their own independent health and safety checks on the site. They have not been rigorous enough in ensuring that these record comprehensively where extra vigilance is needed as, for example, around the pond and wildlife area.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and capabilities that are a little below those expected for their ages, especially in language and social development. Liaison with parents is especially strong, and many parents voice appreciation of the 'Flying Start' course which helps them to support their children as they start school. As a result of the school's efforts, children are helped to quickly settle and they make reasonable progress over the Reception Year, although standards in language and communication, in particular, remain generally below average by the start of Year 1. Relationships are good, and teachers provide the children with an appropriate mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities, both indoors and out. The provision provides an exciting learning environment, and staff assess children's progress and keep a track of how they are doing. This assessment information is not used to best effect to routinely plan opportunities for the children that challenge them to think for themselves and extend their creativity.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents express positive views about the school. Some would like more opportunities to feed in their suggestions and to discuss their child's progress, although even these parents commend the big improvement on communication facilitated by the school's website. Inspectors judged the arrangements for communicating with parents to be good. Some parents voice reservations about teaching assistants taking charge of classes to cover a teacher's absence. Inspectors saw examples of pupils making good progress in lessons led by teaching assistants.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brightside Primary 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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 370 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	70	29	27	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	64	37	35	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	39	58	54	3	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	46	49	46	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	41	57	53	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	36	60	56	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	49	54	50	0	0	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)	34	32	64	60	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	36	59	55	8	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	41	55	51	2	2	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	33	57	54	10	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	50	47	50	47	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	56	42	40	4	4	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brightside Primary School, Billericay CM12 0LE

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit your school. Brightside is a good school where you are making good progress and attaining above average standards by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how very well everyone gets on together. This helps to make your school such a happy, friendly place to be. It is especially good to see how you like to take responsibility and help each other.

The children in the Reception classes settle in quickly, and your parents told us how much they appreciated the 'Flying Start' course. We have asked the teachers to plan more opportunities for Reception children to think for themselves.

Many of you told us that you enjoy school because the teachers make your learning fun across the whole range of different subjects. Staff also take good care of you, but we have asked governors to be more involved in ensuring that it is not just staff who make health and safety checks around the school site. Those of you who need extra help with your learning benefit from good support.

We have asked teachers to make sure that all staff are used fully on those occasions when the whole class are all being taught together. You make good progress, but we have suggested some ways of helping you to do even better. We have asked teachers to make sure that they always give you work that stretches you and that you are able to quickly get on with your activities. Some of your marking gives you very clear guidance on how to improve your work, especially in English, so we have asked your teachers to make it all as good as the best. We have also asked them to make sure that your targets are more closely matched to your individual needs. You can help by making sure you always do your best to achieve your targets, and also by taking extra care with your spellings and the presentation of your work.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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