

Brinkley Grove Primary School

Rawlings Crescent, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex CO4 9GF

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Brinkley Grove Primary School is now a good school. The determined leadership of senior and subject leaders ensures that the school is continuing to improve rapidly.
- Effective governance has contributed well to the school's continuous improvement. Governors use their skills well to support the school.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are effective. However, they do not focus sharply enough on what leaders expect to achieve at key points in time. This reduces the opportunity for governors to ask timely questions about the impact of the school's actions.
- Teachers have benefited from well-planned training and opportunities to work with a range of partners from other local schools. This work has helped them to improve their teaching.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has substantially improved since the previous inspection following the introduction of effective new strategies. As a result, most pupils have made strong progress over the last school year.
- The work set for most-able pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is sometimes too easy or too hard. Advice to pupils about how to improve their work is not precise enough. This means that some most-able pupils and some with SEND do not make the rapid progress they could.
- The wider curriculum is inspiring and well planned. Rich learning experiences contribute well to pupils' academic progress and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Younger pupils are taught phonics well. They use their growing understanding of letters and sounds to help them master their early reading and writing skills.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. Their conduct in lessons and at breaktimes is good. Staff manage the occasionally challenging behaviour of individual pupils well.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They trust staff to look after them well.
- Most parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school and appreciate the improvements made since the previous inspection.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers enable most-able pupils, and those with SEND, to make rapid progress through:
 - carefully adapting the work set so that it meets pupils' needs
 - advising pupils of the precise next steps which will best help them to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that improvement plans clearly set out what leaders intend to achieve at key points over time so that governors can question the impact of the school's work more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by the governors, have secured rapid improvement since the previous inspection. They have set high expectations for pupils and staff. They have implemented well-organised systems to ensure that these expectations are met.
- Leaders at all levels know the school well and have an accurate picture of what most needs to improve. They have set out an ambitious but realistic programme of actions in their improvement plans, which are regularly monitored to ensure that they are successful. However, these action plans do not focus sharply enough on what leaders intend to have achieved at key points in time. This reduces the opportunity for governors to ask timely questions about the impact of the school's work.
- Since the previous inspection subject leadership has significantly improved. Leaders are determined to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes within their designated areas of responsibility. They have made good use of high-quality training to help them lead their subjects effectively. As a result, standards in the wider curriculum are good.
- In order to increase the school's capacity for rapid improvement, leaders and governors have deliberately sought out expertise from a range of external agencies including local schools and the local authority. They have made effective use of this expertise to improve the quality of teaching in the school and to improve subject leadership.
- Leaders have successfully overseen the implementation of new strategies to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. These subjects are taught effectively across the school so that most pupils make rapid progress in each.
- Leaders have ensured that the school environment is orderly and well organised. Inspiring celebrations of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects are displayed in corridors and in classrooms.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to ensure that the varying needs of disadvantaged pupils are met. Leaders check their progress regularly to make sure that none fall behind. Evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that they are making strong progress across a range of subjects.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively to increase the participation of pupils in physical activity, both in lessons and at breaktimes.
- In partnership with a local special school, the interim special needs coordinator (SENCo) is beginning to improve the school's procedures for ensuring that pupils' needs are met. For example, an effective therapeutic approach now supports pupils' social, emotional and mental health and ensures they are ready to learn.
- Training for teachers in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND is giving them a better understanding of how they can support the needs of pupils. However, they are still developing the skills to ensure that they adapt pupils' work appropriately and identify precise next steps to help them progress.
- The vibrant, well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils learn well across a wide range of subjects which are linked so that knowledge in one enhances learning in another.

The wealth of opportunities offered to pupils contribute well to their academic progress and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They value and respect each other because the British values of equality and tolerance are part of day-to-day learning.

- Most parents are supportive of the work of the school and appreciate the improvements made since the previous inspection. As one parent said, summarising the views of many, 'The teachers, management and governors at this school work tirelessly to provide the best possible education for the children.'

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Governors are dedicated to helping school leaders bring about rapid improvement. For example, they have chosen to take part in a rigorous improvement programme of governor support offered by the local authority. They have made good use of external advice in strengthening the leadership of the school.
- A programme of regular visits to check how well pupils are doing ensures that governors know the school well.
- Governance is well organised. Governors' documentation provides a clear record of their decisions and actions, such as matters arising from their monitoring visits to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are well trained and take seriously their responsibility to safeguarding pupils. All policies and procedures meet requirements.
- The training of all staff is up to date and they know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern. The staff spoken to during the inspection were able to explain how they use the computer-based system for recording concerns, and how leaders promptly respond.
- Leaders of safeguarding ensure that records are well organised and kept securely.
- The school has rigorous systems for ensuring that pupils on part-time timetables, or at alternative provision, are safe.
- Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive the timely support they need.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations such as on the internet or when crossing the road.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has significantly improved since the previous inspection. Teachers plan interesting lessons that motivate pupils and make them want to learn. Pupils benefit from consistent approaches which enable most to

make strong progress across subjects.

- Teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to read regularly and widely. They teach reading skills well and ensure that pupils apply these skills through studying a range of children's books. Consequently, pupils develop a wide vocabulary and good understanding of language. For example, pupils' study of the classic text 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' was deepened through working with a professional opera company to perform the story to parents.
- Teachers consistently follow the school's chosen approach to the teaching of phonics. Younger pupils use their growing knowledge of letters and sounds confidently to read unfamiliar words, leading to fluency and good understanding of what they are reading.
- In writing, teachers plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to write across range of subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils practised writing persuasively through drafting a letter to urge someone who lived in Sparta to come to Athens, using their historical knowledge to justify their arguments.
- Mathematics is taught well. Teachers make good use of mathematical resources to help pupils visualise mathematical ideas such as the division of numbers, leading to secure understanding. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to succeed.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge across a range of subjects enables them to use effective questions in lessons which deepen pupils' thinking and help them know what to do next.
- The effective work of learning support assistants contributes well to pupils' progress. In particular, their good understanding of pupils' needs and effective questioning helps pupils gain in confidence.
- Teachers use their assessments of what pupils understand and can do to set suitable work and to advise pupils on how to improve their work. This ensures that most pupils make good progress.
- At times, feedback to the most able pupils and those with SEND about how they can improve their work is not incisive enough. Learning tasks do not consistently meet the needs of these pupils because the work is too easy or too hard. As a result they do not make the progress they could.
- Good relationships between adults and pupils enable teachers to create a positive working environment where pupils can do their best. Pupils willingly meet teachers' high expectations for producing their best work, and pupils' workbooks are consistently well presented.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and settled in class. They have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best. They show perseverance when their work is hard and do not give up.
- Pupils are able to collaborate well on learning tasks. They take care to listen to each

other and respect each other's views.

- Pupils are proud of their work to take care of the environment. They enjoy competitions organised by 'eco chiefs' to prevent litter, to recycle and to be 'eco-friendly'.
- All pupils are provided with opportunities to take part in a wealth of life experiences from looking after the school guinea pigs to tending to the new garden.
- Pupils care for each other. During the inspection they were observed showing many acts of kindness such as inviting pupils on their own to sit with them at lunchtime. Most have empathy for pupils who experience difficulties such as those who struggle with their behaviour. This is a contributing factor to the calm, well-ordered school culture.
- Pupils are keen to describe lessons and assemblies where they learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They have a good understanding of the risks involved in daily life. They understand the importance of physical fitness and how to eat a healthy diet.
- Most pupils believe that there is little bullying and take its prevention very seriously. They are confident that school staff deal effectively with any isolated incidents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils come into school happily and settle quickly. Their conduct in lessons and at breaktimes is good. They move around the school calmly and respond readily to the high expectations set by staff.
- There is little low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils follow instructions quickly and settle to the task in hand with little or no fuss. Pupils are eager to earn 'dojo' points which support positive behaviour and help them develop good learning habits.
- The occasionally challenging behaviour of individual pupils is managed sensitively by staff who follow the school's behaviour policy well.
- Pupils' attendance is good and typically above average. Leaders' continued actions and monitoring ensure that the number of pupils who are persistent non-attenders is reducing and is below average.
- The number of fixed-period exclusions rose this school year. Inspectors scrutinised the school's exclusion procedures, which were found to meet appropriate guidelines and confirmed that exclusion is used as a last resort.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The determined actions of leaders and governors have brought about rapid improvement in pupils' outcomes over the course of the current school year.
- Over the last three years, progress in key stage 2 has not been strong and sustained in any subject. In 2018, published progress scores in reading and mathematics were below average, and well below average in writing. Leaders and governors have

analysed these results carefully and have put in place effective measures which have convincingly improved this picture across the school.

- The work in current pupils' books confirms that all year groups are now making strong progress. Pupils' work displayed in classrooms and public areas shows that they achieve well across a range of subjects such as art and geography.
- Well-planned programmes of work ensure that pupils learn the knowledge and skills specific to each subject, such how to create tonal effects (light and dark) in art.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved over the last three years and was above the national average in 2018. The good teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 ensures that most pupils continue to meet the expected standard.
- Pupils make the most of varied opportunities to read widely and often. Pupils say that they love to spend time reading the exciting books they find in the new library and enjoy reading the books recommended by their friends. They appreciate the regular opportunities to read quietly by themselves and to 'see what happens next in a story'.
- Most disadvantaged pupils are making good or better progress from their different starting points. Monitoring by leaders is effective in identifying pupils who are falling behind and in taking appropriate action. Where needed, effective therapeutic provision ensures that pupils make good progress in their attitudes to learning. This includes those in alternative provision and those who attend school part time.
- A minority of pupils with SEND do not make rapid enough progress because their work is too hard and they do not receive precise enough guidance on how to improve.
- Some most-able pupils do not make the rapid progress they could because their work is not adapted to their abilities routinely enough. Too often feedback to pupils about their work does not stretch them further.
- The positive attitudes and improving outcomes of most pupils make them well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years and make strong progress from their varying starting points. The proportion reaching a good level of development has risen in recent years and in 2018 was above the national average. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader and her team know the children well. They ensure that children's learning is assessed methodically so that they can plan suitable learning tasks. For example, effective mechanisms are in place to ensure that children with SEND can access learning.
- Children are making particularly strong progress in writing. They are taught how to form their letters correctly and benefit from a wide range of exciting opportunities to practise their writing. During the inspection children were keen to show inspectors the successful writing in their books and achievements recorded in their learning journeys.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Children apply their phonic knowledge well when

they are reading so that they can sound out unfamiliar words. In writing, they are confident to put letters together to spell different words.

- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are inviting and well organised. Children are provided with a wide range of learning activities which appeal to their different interests and promote effective learning experiences.
- The early years team are keen to keep their practice up to date and constantly seek ways of improving provision for children. For example, they have forged an effective partnership with a local outstanding early years provider.
- Children enjoy their time in school. They are eager to immerse themselves in a broad range of learning experiences and are proud of their successes.
- Well-established routines and clear expectations ensure that children's behaviour is good and that they feel safe. The positive relationships between them and adults are central to their well-being and contribute to the consideration that children show to each other.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about provision in the early years. They appreciate the good communication with staff and the way their children are cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	131219
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10088667

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	402
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miles Moseley
Headteacher	Darren Smith
Telephone number	01206 852266
Website	www.brinkleygrove.essex.sch.uk
Email address	info@brinkleygrove.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February – 1 March 2017

Information about this school

- Brinkley Grove Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- Just over two thirds of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- There is a before- and after-school club which is separately registered with Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons in all year groups, jointly with the senior leaders. They scrutinised a variety of pupils' work in every year group, talked to pupils about their learning during lessons and listened to pupils read.
- All inspectors observed behaviour in the playground over the two days of the inspection.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders, school office staff, teachers and pupils. They met with governors, and had a discussion with the local authority representative.
- The 94 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were taken into account along with the 85 free-text messages. Additionally, inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start of the school day in the playground. The results of the 40 responses to the staff survey were considered.
- A wide range of documentation was evaluated by the inspectors. These included the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, and the school's current performance information. The inspectors scrutinised the checks that the school does to ensure the suitability of adults who work with pupils and leaders' records of behaviour and exclusions, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Judith Sumner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector
Tania Perry	Ofsted Inspector

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