

Briary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118520
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	379632
Inspection dates	31 January – 1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Joy Considine

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Stanley
Headteacher	Ben Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	13 – 14 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	31 January – 1 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joy Considine

Additional inspector

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Additional inspector

Claire Baldry

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 32 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 15 teachers. They held meetings with staff, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, pupils' assessment and tracking information, pupils' work and other documentation relevant to the inspection, including that relating to safeguarding. They also analysed the outcomes of questionnaires received by 111 parents and carers as well as those received from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school and it serves pupils from the local community. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than usual. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups and the percentage who speak English as an additional language are lower than usual. There is an above average percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. A larger than usual number of pupils join the school mid-way through the year. The school meets current floor standards. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage for children is made in the Reception classes. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils. There is a pre-school and a Children's Centre on site, neither of which are managed by the governing body. The Children's Centre was inspected separately, at the same time as the school.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for pupils. School leaders have addressed the issues from the last inspection and they have successfully implemented appropriate plans to address remaining areas of weakness.
- Pupils' make satisfactory progress so that in Year 6 they reach levels of attainment that are broadly average. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and children make steady progress and reach levels of skills that are similar to those expected for their age. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress most rapidly because they receive well-focused support that is specifically targeted to meet their particular needs.
- Although nearly half of the lessons seen were good, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is because there are a few remaining variations between classes and year groups, which does not provide a consistent approach for pupils over time.
- Pupils are friendly and polite and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Their attendance has improved and is now above average. There are good systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe in school.
- School leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of what needs to be done. They have reviewed the work of the school and have established an appropriate programme of monitoring and professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The curriculum meets the learning needs of most pupils but in some lessons they are not given enough opportunity to practise their literacy and numeracy skills when learning other subjects.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement so that 80% of pupils reach level 4 in English and in mathematics and increase the percentage of pupils who reach the higher levels by July 2013, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills when learning other subjects
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do
 - setting long-term targets for pupils so that their progress can be monitored more effectively as they move through the school.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that the proportion that is consistently good or better increases significantly by January 2013, by:
 - using assessment information to plan lessons that are matched to the learning needs of all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about how much work they are expected to complete within a time limit
 - reducing the number of photocopied worksheets to give pupils more opportunity to record their work independently.

- Improve leadership and management by making systems to monitor teachers' work more robust by including a regular scrutiny of pupils' work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Although pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has been low, the school has successfully implemented actions which have reversed a legacy of underachievement. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011, attainment in English was broadly average and although it was low in mathematics, it improved significantly from the previous year. Pupils in most lessons are now making satisfactory and occasionally better progress although it is better in reading than in writing. Boys are now achieving as well as girls because the staff have successfully reviewed curriculum provision. Topics such as The Blitz have inspired boys to write and this has improved their skills and their motivation to write.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with challenging activities and adults provide well-focused support by providing timely interventions to develop children's knowledge and understanding. Consequently children now make good progress in most aspects of their development and are reaching levels of skills that are broadly as expected for their age. Many children are able to sound out letters to make and read simple words and some are able to write simple sentences. Nevertheless, their skills in writing remain lower than in other aspects of their development.

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The school has reorganised procedures for supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Their specific needs are identified early and they receive good support from skilled teaching assistants who help them in lessons, in small groups and occasionally individually. This helps these pupils to make at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress. In the lessons observed, pupils were enthusiastic and enjoyed taking part when the activities were challenging. They listened carefully to teachers and there was a sense of excitement when learning something new so that they made good progress. This was seen in one Year 4 lesson when pupils watched in fascination as the teacher used a torch to demonstrate light and dark to show how the earth moves around the sun. Pupils made less progress and became fidgety when tasks set for them were not matched sufficiently well to their abilities and were too easy.

Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that most make satisfactory and occasionally better progress, particularly in those lessons where work provided builds on what pupils already know and can do. However, in a few lessons, the work does not build on previous learning and this slows the progress that pupils make. Work seen in pupils' books is usually well matched to their needs. However, in a few lessons the over-use of photocopied resource sheets limits pupils' opportunities to record work independently. Pupils' attainment in reading has improved and is now broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is because teachers have re-organised the way in which reading is taught so that pupils are able to build their skills systematically and progressively. In reading lessons, pupils are given a variety of activities to develop their ability to read fluently and independently. Most pupils have books that are matched to their needs and interests and they read with confidence and enjoyment. They are able to talk about the books they enjoy and, in Key Stage 2, they are able to discuss their preferences regarding different authors. By the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment in reading is above average.

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey felt that their children were taught well and that they were making good progress. One parent or carer reflected the views of many by writing, 'Both my children are progressing well and they fully enjoy taking an active part in this friendly school.' Inspectors found that although pupils enjoy school, their achievement overall is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

Most teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide challenging tasks which enable all pupils to make satisfactory and occasionally good progress. In most lessons, the pace is brisk and pupils know how much they are expected to achieve within a given time limit. In many lessons, teachers use imaginative methods to capture pupils' interest and to arouse their sense of wonder and curiosity and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual and cultural development. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school and there remain some lessons where pupils do not progress as well as they should. Parents and carers feel that teaching is good but inspectors found that in some lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. In these lessons,

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teachers are spending too much time revising what pupils already know and can do. In the better lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and they are skilled at asking questions that extend pupils' knowledge and deepen their understanding. This was exemplified in one mathematics lesson in which the teacher constantly challenged pupils by asking them to justify their calculations and to give reasons for their answers.

The curriculum is mostly matched appropriately to pupils' levels of development, but in some lessons the activities are too easy and this slows progress for some pupils. This is because a few teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan lessons that are matched to pupils' needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have some structured lessons to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and there is a good balance of activities that they select which enables them to develop good personal skills such as independence, cooperation and resilience.

There is a carefully planned programme of intervention strategies in place to help those pupils who need additional help and support. Sometimes this involves one-to-one support in the classroom provided by skilled teaching assistants or more intensive group work in which pupils follow a structured programme to help them to catch up with their classmates.

The quality of teachers' marking has improved and most pupils are provided with good quality comments showing them what they have done and what their next steps in learning are. In some classes, teachers have a well-structured system for pupils to respond to lessons and to allow them to evaluate how well they have done. Pupils in most classes are confident that the targets they have been given are appropriate and help them to learn. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are skilled at observing children and using this information to plan learning experiences that are well matched to their developmental needs and enable them to make good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and consequently pupils behave well in lessons and in and around the school. They get on well together and respect each other and adults. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are able to share and cooperate with each other and they understand the need to take turns and to listen to each other. All adults in school provide good role models for pupils. As one parent or carer wrote, 'All teachers and staff are approachable and friendly. There is a kind, gentle, thoughtful and family atmosphere between pupils and teachers.' Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and they say that most pupils usually behave well. Teachers reinforce positive behaviour and this makes a contribution to pupils' good social and moral development. The school has meticulous procedures for recording and monitoring incidents and this shows that the number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour is declining rapidly.

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Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, for example cyber bullying, but they say that incidents of bullying are rare and that they feel safe in school. They say that should an incident arise, adults are on hand to help. The school provides good support to one or two pupils who have specific difficulties and there is a designated area that provides pupils with a calm environment in which they can quietly reflect until they are able to return to class. Inspectors agreed with the large majority of parents and carers who felt that there is a good standard of behaviour and safety in school. Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average. The after-school club provides a wide range of activities for pupils to enjoy and the breakfast club gives pupils a nutritious start to the day with a variety of options, including a cooked breakfast.

Leadership and management

School leaders, including governors, are ambitious and have high expectations for staff and pupils. This is reflected in their aim 'to develop strong skills in reading, writing and mathematics'. To this end, they have successfully implemented several initiatives to reverse the downward trend in attainment. The senior leadership team has been strengthened to include the leader of the English curriculum team as the Upper Years team leader. Pupils' performance is monitored each term and systems are being further reviewed to provide a clear overview of what pupils should, or could achieve during their time at school.

Leaders have evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses and they have established a programme of professional development to improve the skills of staff at all levels. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they have secure systems in place to monitor and challenge the school and hold leaders to account. While monitoring of teaching has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, the scrutiny of pupils' books is less robust.

The curriculum is satisfactory. School leaders have reviewed the curriculum and made changes to ensure that all pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive daily focused teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the range of topics has been reviewed to make it more stimulating for pupils. Topics such as The Great Fire of London are used to inspire pupils to read and write but this good practice is not consistent throughout the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, however, there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect on life in a global society.

Although leaders and the governing body are committed to equality of opportunity and successfully ensure that there is no discrimination, there are still some variations in outcomes for pupils owing to inconsistency in teaching. Governors have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

After the previous inspection, attainment in English and mathematics fell. Leaders

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recognised this and rapidly put into place actions to successfully reverse this decline. School leaders and governors have addressed the issues from the previous inspection and have secured further improvement. The systems for monitoring the performance of the school are adequate and self-evaluation is broadly accurate showing that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



3 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Briary Primary School, Herne Bay CT6 7RS

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say about your school. You told us that you are happy and feel safe in school and that adults care about you and help you. Many of you said how much your targets helped you to learn and that you enjoyed your lessons.

We have found that your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. While your school does many things well, we found that too many of you have not always done as well as you should in reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked your school leaders to put into place a number of actions to make sure you all achieve as well as you should. This is what we have asked them to do:

- ensure that most of you reach at least Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and that more of you reach the higher Level 5
- make sure that teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that meet your needs and to build on what you already know and can do
- regularly look at your books to make sure that you make good progress in your lessons, and ensure that you have more opportunities to practise your literacy and numeracy skills when learning other subjects.

You can help your school leaders by asking for harder work when you find lessons too easy and by working hard in all lessons. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Lead inspector

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