

Briary Primary School

Greenhill Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7RS

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The vision, purpose and effectiveness of leaders, including governors, are moving the school forward at an impressive rate. They form an effective team, ensuring a positive climate while sharply focused on enabling adults and pupils to succeed.
- Throughout the school there is a strongly positive ethos. Pupils' behaviour is good, and their attitudes reflect the clearly articulated school, British and Cooperative Trust values. They respect and help each other, work well together and persevere.
- Adults plan a broad range of interesting experiences and activities which motivate good-quality learning. The school is bright and vibrant with celebrations of pupils' work which showcase their achievements across different subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. It is most effective in Reception and in upper key stage 2. As a result, the youngest and the oldest pupils make particularly rapid progress.
- Leaders, including governors, gather and make good use of information to identify the school's strengths and tackle weaknesses. They have been effective in tackling some historic underachievement in key stage 2. As a result, last year, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were above average in writing and mathematics, and well above average in reading.
- Last year, pupils at the end of key stage 1 did not achieve as well as in previous years. Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that these pupils, now in Year 3, are receiving enhanced provision, so that they are catching up rapidly. Nonetheless the current progress of key stage 1 pupils is not quite as good as in the rest of the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than other pupils in some year groups. This is linked to their attendance, which is also lower than that of other pupils. Both the achievement and attendance of this group are at the heart of the school's current improvement plan.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise expectations about the quality and quantity of work pupils can achieve throughout key stage 1.
- Improve the attainment, progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have successfully built a climate within which pupils and adults flourish. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are central to the school's ethos and leaders' vision. Leaders seek out and build on people's strengths and are imaginative in their approaches to personal development and training in order to achieve deeply rooted change. Staff and pupils responded very positively to the Ofsted online questionnaires. They are proud to be part of the school and feel motivated and well supported.
- There are well-thought-out whole school systems, strategies and routines to meet the needs and the interests of the pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Consistent approaches are evident around school. For example, the learning is planned to ensure that all pupils in the same year groups have equal opportunities to benefit from the same rich learning experiences.
- Leaders make good use of information about the attainment of individuals, classes and groups to pinpoint where improvements have happened and where further improvements are needed. They carefully analyse the reasons for some pupils not achieving as well as others and implement strategies to address particular weaknesses, such as enhanced provision for speech, language and communication. All staff are involved and accountable for pupils' success. For example, all teaching staff have targets to improve the achievements of boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is carefully managed, as is the sports premium funding. In the past the impact of the different strategies has not been evaluated as sharply as possible to make sure that all interventions and actions are making enough difference.
- The curriculum is well planned with a strong focus on making learning relevant and interesting. Links are common across different subjects. For example, in Year 3 reading sessions, teachers used texts linked to the eruption of Vesuvius in Roman times. Activities such as visits and visitors are built into all topics to enrich the learning. As a result, pupils are interested and eager learners.
- Subject leaders provide support for colleagues and bring about improvements. The current strong focus on reading and development of pupils' vocabulary means that there are well-planned and carefully thought out strategies to enliven reading throughout the school, including the book shed in the playground where pupils can swap books.
- Parents and carers are generally very confident that their children are safe, looked after and well taught in school. The in-house parent survey for November 2017, which includes 250 responses, is markedly more positive than the results of the 41 responses on the online survey Parent View. Some of the latter group expressed concerns particularly about the management of behaviour, bullying and the timeliness of communication. Behaviour was certainly a problem in the past, but this is an aspect where rigorous whole-school action has resulted in dramatic improvements. The result is a positive ethos and atmosphere throughout the school.

- The school's work with the other schools in the Coastal Alliance Cooperative Trust and the local authority adviser enables teachers to check the accuracy of their assessments and share good practice. This work also underpins the school's vision and values. Leaders are outward looking and keen to learn from the most up-to-date research.

Governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable and proactive. They make a real difference to the ethos, purpose and direction of the school. They helped develop and promote the school motto of 'GOALS – great opportunities, great achievement, great learning, great school.' They check different aspects thoroughly, such as the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, the use of additional funding and the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' achievements and attitudes to reading. Governors are well trained, regular visitors who closely scrutinise the systems to ensure pupils academic achievement as well as their safety and well-being.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils, staff and parents say overwhelmingly that children are safe and well looked after in school.
- The school policies and practice on safeguarding, staff and governor training and systems for checking staff and visitors are reviewed regularly and are robust.
- Staff understand the systems for raising concerns and careful records show that rigorous action is taken to support pupils, particularly the relatively high number of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Careful monitoring of attendance and behaviour and effective action to address difficulties has resulted in some important and visible improvements.
- There are opportunities for pupils to learn about and to discuss safeguarding issues. This was evident during a year 5 session on what it means to be a friend, when the discussions included issues around online safety and social media.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and means that pupils throughout the school are making at least reasonable progress. Teaching is particularly strong in key stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, and these pupils are making very rapid progress indeed across the different subjects.
- Teaching and learning in key stage 1 classes is more variable and this is borne out in the pupils' books, where the evidence of progress in writing and mathematics also varies. Nonetheless, their progress is never less than reasonable and is sometimes good.
- Teachers collaborate to plan consistently across classes. They pay close attention to pupils' needs and interests so that learning is well planned and generally engaging. The

adults build on previous learning, addressing misconceptions and mistakes quickly to move the learning on.

- The very-well-established routines throughout the school, including the systems for managing behaviour, mean that pupils feel secure and move smoothly between activities. Behaviour is well managed and adults promote positive attitudes to learning.
- Where provision is particularly strong, adults have very good subject knowledge and use probing questions to make the pupils think, explain their ideas and move their understanding on. They give useful on-the-spot feedback and have high expectations of behaviour and learning. Where the learning is less effective, it is sometimes overcomplicated and fragmented so that pupils do not have enough time to get their teeth into an activity.
- Teachers promote reading well. This is a key focus for the school. They use a stimulating and engaging choice of texts to underpin each term's topic. The pupils are enthusiastic about these books. Pupils read confidently and are happy to talk about their reading choices.
- The coverage of mathematics is strong with a good balance between fluency and problem-solving in most classes. There is less evidence of reasoning, which tallies with an occasional lack of challenge for some pupils.
- The emphasis on lively, engaging learning spills over onto the learning environments throughout the school. These are full of valuable resources which the pupils readily use. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and the classrooms are rich in language. The pupils' work on display shows high-quality learning in different subjects and some interesting activities such as the work related to the Ted Hughes book, 'The Iron Man'.
- The learning activities are generally well matched to pupils' needs. Sometimes the most able pupils find tasks a bit easy and could be challenged more. Teaching assistants provide valuable support, particularly during lessons, to enable less able pupils to participate and benefit from the experiences.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils of all ages exemplify the school's values. They show perseverance, kindness and collaboration. They take pride in their achievements. This was very noticeable in classrooms and also when different groups of pupils led a guided tour of the school, discussed their reading or talked about the Change for Life Club activities.
- Pupils feel they are listened to and they trust adults to deal with any problems or concerns. Teachers explore pupils' understanding of personal and social issues using sensitive questioning and sparking thoughtful discussions.
- There are good systems to support pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult. In the past the number of fixed-term exclusions for very poor behaviour was

very high. There are very few of these incidents now because of the successful action taken by the school.

- Adults keep careful records to make sure that behaviour and welfare concerns are noted, analysed and acted on when appropriate.
- There are valuable relationships between the school, parents and carers and external agencies, including secondary schools and pre-schools. This enables useful sharing of expertise and information, and smooth transitions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in and out of class. They move around the classroom and the school safely and sensibly.
- They listen respectfully to the adults and to other pupils. The school's emphasis on pupils supporting each other is very evident throughout the school.
- Lessons generally run smoothly and there are very few incidents of disruptive behaviour. The pupils who find behaving well difficult are skilfully managed. Occasionally, when the learning is less interesting, or pupils are not sure what to do, a few sit back, chat quietly and achieve less than they should.
- Attendance used to be below average but the school's work in this area has led to strong improvements over the past three years. Attendance is now similar to most schools. There have been some notable successes where pupils' attendance has shot up.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Last year, pupils who were in Year 6 achieved much better than had been the case in previous years. Their reading, writing and mathematics skills were above the national average and particularly high in reading. As a result, they left the school to embark on their secondary school careers much better prepared than previously.
- Pupils' achievements at the end of Reception and in the Year 1 phonics check have also been rising over the past few years.
- In the past, pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills at the end of Year 2 have been at least at the national average. Outcomes fell last year due to a combination of issues such as a higher-than-usual number of pupils arriving in the middle of the year, staff changes and illness. In addition, this cohort came into Reception with skills which were generally fairly low.
- School leaders and class teachers are tackling this weakness to make sure that this group of pupils catch up quickly. The assessment information gathered last term shows that they are making very rapid progress.
- The work in pupils' books, and on display, shows that, throughout the school, pupils are making good progress so far this year, particularly in English and mathematics. The

quality and quantity of the pupils' work in other subjects is stronger in some year groups than in others.

- The school's assessment data shows that, although overall pupils are making consistently good progress across English and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils and boys do less well than others in several year groups. This is especially true in reading and writing. The school is strongly focused on improving the achievement of these pupils and is adopting various strategies to engage their interest. For example, there is an emphasis on providing practical experiences, developing language skills and vocabulary and providing boy-friendly books.

Early years provision

Good

- The quality of provision, leadership, teamwork and learning are all strong in the Reception classes.
- The children often start school with low scores on some of the baseline assessment aspects, particularly in language, communication and personal and social skills. However, the early years leader quite rightly believes that they are not low in potential and that the purpose of the early years is to close gaps by providing rich learning experiences.
- Learning is well matched to children's abilities and interests. Good links between the activities help to develop good reading, writing and mathematics skills as well as providing experiences to make, do and enjoy learning.
- There is a strong focus on speech, communication and language, and the specialised support for speech and language is very effective. Children demonstrate positive behaviour. They enjoy learning, concentrate well, collaborate and are confident. For example, children made space for others and worked happily together without needing to be asked.
- The early years staff work very well as a team and assistants are well prepared to carry out their responsibilities. In the early reading sessions, it is not easy to tell who are the teachers and who are the assistants because everyone is confident and very clear about what they, and the children, should be learning.
- When the adults are very confident in the learning activities the quality of their questioning and interaction with the pupils is good. This is less true of the more fluid sessions when children are making individual choices about their learning. The pace of learning drops during these times.
- There is good use of resources, including the outside area. During the inspection, children were eager to find the groups of words dotted about outside. Inside, a group were confident in writing simple words and making up their own sentences.
- The team use outdoor learning and forest school effectively to promote children's knowledge of the world and also develop their personal and social skills.
- There are good, productive relationships with parents. Parents, at the start of the day, were very pleased with how well their children had settled in school and were achieving.

School details

Unique reference number	118520
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10040702

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Webber
Headteacher	Mr R McDonagh
Telephone number	01227 373 095
Website	www.briary.kent.sch.uk/
Email address	office1@briary.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 November 2013

Information about this school

- Briary is situated on the edge of Herne Bay in Kent. It is larger than most primary schools with two classes in each year group.
- Most pupils are White British with a small number of pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average and higher-than-average numbers arrive or leave during their time in primary education.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those with an education, health and care plan, is broadly average.
- The school is a local authority-maintained foundation school and is a member of the Cooperative Trust along with three other local schools. These schools form the Coastal Alliance Cooperative Trust.

- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards (minimum standards for pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2).

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes on both days, spoke to pupils, looked at work in their books, and heard them read. Some observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors accompanied pupils on a tour of the school, attended an assembly, lunch with pupils in the dining hall and spent time outside at playtime.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, pupils, four members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground and took into account 41 responses, including written comments, to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also looked at the results of an in-house survey of 250 parents' views carried out in November 2017. They also took account of 45 staff responses and 68 pupil responses to the online questionnaires.
- A range of documents were reviewed, including the school's development plan and leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness, information about pupils' achievement, governing body records, and information concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Meades	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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