

Inspection of Brightlingsea Primary School and Nursery

Eastern Road, Brightlingsea, Colchester, Essex CO7 0HU

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February, and 26 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have experienced many changes for the better in the past few years. They enjoy coming to this vibrant school. Pupils show respect for each other and for the adults who look after them. They are tolerant and compassionate. Pupils benefit from the trusting relationships with staff, who they know care for them.

Pupils have not achieved as well as they should have in the past. Pupils now benefit from learning a broad curriculum. They respond well to the much higher expectations that teachers have of them. This is reflected in pupils' achievements in recent national tests and assessments.

The school is a calm and welcoming environment. Pupils behave particularly well. They are polite, friendly and helpful. Pupils show highly positive attitudes to learning. They listen well, follow instructions and try their best in class, so learning time is used well. At breaktimes, girls and boys mix and play happily together.

Pupils enjoy an extensive range of activities where they can develop their talents or follow new interests. Examples include the award-winning school choir, learning at the beach and the different clubs on offer. Pupil ambassadors and school councillors are proud of their roles in putting forward pupils' views.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has constructed a broad curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. It sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn clearly, from early years through to Year 6.

In many subjects, teachers present knowledge clearly and explain things well. They remind pupils of what they have learned previously. This helps pupils to make connections with what they already know and build their understanding of more complex knowledge. In a few subjects, teachers do this less successfully. Pupils do not learn as well in these subjects, as they sometimes struggle to remember and use important knowledge.

The school emphasises the importance of pupils being able to read well. Staff encourage pupils to share and read books through dedicated reading lessons. Teachers ensure that books are central to the topics that pupils study. From the very start in Nursery, children learn to recognise the sounds letters make. They build on this through daily phonics teaching in Reception and Year 1. The school ensures that staff have the expertise needed to teach phonics effectively. Any pupils who fall behind receive support that helps them catch up. Many pupils become confident, fluent readers by the time they leave the school.

The school ensures that the early years curriculum creates the firm foundations children need for future learning. Children develop their language and communication skills well, which helps them access other areas of learning. Staff

ensure children build on what they learn in Nursery when they move into the Reception class. Children follow familiar routines that help them to follow instructions and focus on well-planned learning activities. Children develop their independence and the attributes they need to be ready for learning in Year 1.

The school ensures early identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders draw on the expertise of other professionals when necessary to ensure that pupils with SEND get the support they need. Teachers skilfully adapt activities so that most pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others. A small number of pupils with SEND receive highly individualised support to meet their needs. This helps them to achieve well.

Pupils are courteous and well mannered. The school establishes high expectations for behaviour from the start of early years. Children learn to share and take turns. These positive relationships are maintained as pupils get older. Teachers encourage pupils' good behaviour through conversations and rewards.

Pupils learn about the lives of people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. They show excellent understanding of difference. This shows in the deep understanding pupils demonstrate about cultures different to their own. Pupils learn about and contribute to the local community, for example through charity work or visiting the lobster hatchery. Pupils are articulate when they discuss 'big ideas'.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. They check in with staff and pupils to ensure improvements are working well. Leaders consider changes carefully. They make sure these make things better for pupils. They carefully consider how changes affect staff's workload. Staff appreciate the training opportunities provided to them. Training is carefully tailored to school priorities and developing individual teachers' expertise. This carefully focused training has improved the quality of education the school provides. Staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not always emphasise and revisit the important subject knowledge needed to understand more complex knowledge. Pupils sometimes find it hard to remember this important knowledge and to apply it when learning new content and more complex knowledge. They struggle to make connections with what they have already learned. The school should ensure that, in all subjects, teachers help pupils learn and remember important subject knowledge so that they can build effectively on prior learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	114755
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10294936
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	674
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Marsha Robinson and Juliette Heppell
Headteacher	Laura Khine
Website	www.brightlingsea.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in school leadership since the previous inspection. The school appointed a new headteacher and deputy headteacher in January 2021. Two assistant headteachers took up post in April 2021. There have also been changes in teaching staff. Over half of the staff were not working at the school when it was previously inspected.
- Since the previous inspection, the board of governors has appointed two new co-chairs and several new members of the governing body.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND has increased since the previous inspection. This is true both for pupils in receipt of an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) and for pupils with SEND who do not have an EHC plan.
- The school uses no providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors initially visited the school on 28 and 29 February 2024. Ofsted deemed that further evidence was required to secure the inspection judgements. As a result, this inspection was deemed 'incomplete'. One of His Majesty's Inspectors visited the school on 26 March 2024 to gather additional evidence to ensure the evidence base was secure in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy. The evidence gathered from both visits was used to inform the final judgements.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and members of the governing body, including the co-chairs of governors. An inspector also spoke to representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. Inspectors listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- During the further visit to the school, the inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the co-chairs of the governing body. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour before school, in lessons and at lunchtime. The inspector visited lessons and reviewed work in pupils' books. The inspector reviewed, discussed and evaluated a range of information, including about pupils' attendance and behaviour and the training provided for staff. The inspector spoke to pupils during visits to lessons and when observing behaviour at lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents. They spoke with groups of parents and reviewed 130 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 116 free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to consider their views. They reviewed 40 responses to the pupil survey and 55 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Pamela Finch, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alice Early	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Shadbolt	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Wade	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Wilson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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