

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Brinkley Grove Primary School

Rawlings Crescent, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex CO4 9GF

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive a high level of care at Brinkley Grove. Parents and carers are very impressed with how staff go above and beyond to support pupils' well-being. Pupils have many trusted adults to talk to. They benefit from weekly visits from a church minister where they can share their feelings.

Many pupils behave very well. Older pupils display excellent levels of focus on their work. They are proud to meet adults' high expectations of what they should achieve. Likewise, in Reception, children are developing important knowledge and learning habits. They are proud to share their emerging writing skills. However, in some other years, adults' expectations of how pupils should behave, and what they should achieve, are not as ambitious as in other areas.

Pupils are delighted by their outdoor play and learning areas. They play with their peers and develop excellent friendships. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have a vast array of well-planned activities to enjoy from a giant sand pit to a dress-up zone. From the Reception Year, they develop their physical stamina, curiosity and social skills. This is often a highlight of their day. Many pupils enjoy the responsibility of being peer rangers and helping to keep their peers safe and happy.

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

The curriculum is well designed to build on pupils' prior learning. Curriculum guidance clearly sets out what pupils need to learn. Many teachers are skilled at knowing how pupils learn best. They explain the learning clearly, skilfully questioning pupils to check that everyone has understood them. If there are any misunderstandings, these are

quickly addressed. Teachers give pupils time to practise their learning. They provide targeted support to individuals, including those with SEND. This ensures that everyone keeps up. There is a strong focus on developing secure reading habits, particularly in the older years. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about their love of reading. By the end of Year 6, many pupils achieve very highly and are well prepared for their secondary school.

The school's context has changed considerably since the previous inspection. They now support significantly more pupils with SEND. This has resulted in an increase in staff training needs. The school is taking appropriate action to provide staff with the skills and support they need. However, they recognise there is more to do to ensure all pupils are appropriately supported to achieve highly.

In some younger year groups, the curriculum is not being delivered as well as the school intends. This includes the early reading curriculum. Adults do not always know the best ways to support pupils to learn and remember what is being taught. They do not always check pupils' understanding, or adapt the learning appropriately, when they spot gaps in pupils' knowledge. Many younger pupils are supported well to develop the skills they need to read fluently. However, other pupils are not helped appropriately to quickly become fluent readers. As a result, unlike their older peers, some younger pupils cannot always read, write or apply mathematics sufficiently well for their age.

Many pupils throughout all year groups display impeccable behaviour. They are polite and friendly and a pleasure to talk to. At playtime, with the effective support of adults, most pupils conduct themselves very well. They are kind and courteous to others. While the school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour are normally met, this is not consistently the case, particularly in younger years. Where this happens, adults do not have high enough expectations for how pupils should behave. Adults do not consistently provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their concentration skills. Consequently, some pupils, including those with SEND, miss out on their learning.

Pupils in the Reception Year, including those with SEND, display high levels of concentration. They are eager to join in with activities such as role play, phonics or painting. Adults have a secure sense of what children know and can do. Staff adapt activities very well to meet children's different needs.

Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They know how to stay safe. They develop a good understanding of healthy habits and how to form secure relationships. They learn how to understand their feelings and emotions. Pupils are respectful. Pupils of different race and religion study and play well alongside one another.

School leaders, including governors, consistently take actions that are in the pupils' best interests. They recognise the challenges that the school has faced with the changing demographic post-COVID. While there is more to do to ensure their actions are sufficiently impactful in all areas of the school, leaders are taking the right steps to support all pupils appropriately.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all adults are sufficiently well trained to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Sometimes adults do not provide pupils with appropriate work to ensure they meet the aims of the curriculum. Too often younger pupils are not being supported well enough to read, write or apply mathematics as well as they should for their age. The school needs to ensure that all adults are provided with appropriate training and support so they develop the knowledge and skills to support all pupils to achieve well.
- Some teachers do not use assessment well enough. They do not always identify accurately pupils' different starting points and gaps in knowledge or understanding, often as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school should ensure that all teachers understand how to best check pupils' understanding and how to use this information effectively to inform their teaching.
- Some adults do not have high enough expectations for how pupils should behave. This is particularly the case for pupils in the younger years. Too often, adults have not established clear classroom routines for pupils to follow. Adults do not consistently provide pupils with the most effective support to help them build good learning habits. The school needs to ensure that adults receive the support and training they need to create a purposeful learning environment where all pupils can flourish.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	131219
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345275
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	427
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Martin
Headteacher	Darren Smith
Website	www.brinkleygrove.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. She also spoke with the special educational needs coordinator, governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a sample of curriculum documents, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.

- The inspector reviewed survey responses submitted through Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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