

Brigstock Latham's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122011
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380384
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Joseph Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Abigail Marsden
Headteacher	Tim Leah
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed four teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and children, and looked at school planning, assessment data and pupils' completed work. They assessed the quality of the school's documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 87 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils. One inspector attended the Remembrance Day service with all staff and pupils at the village war memorial.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do the quality of teaching and the curriculum contribute effectively to raising girls' attainment by the end of Year 2 and improving writing for all pupils by the end of Year 6?
- Are senior staff and governors effective in identifying strengths and areas for improvement and ensuring that pupils' individual learning needs are met?
- Have improvements to the provision for indoor and outdoor learning resulted in better progress for children in Reception?
- Do pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of cultures beyond their own?

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school and most pupils in this rural area are of White British heritage. Accommodation is in two buildings on the same site, with three classes in one building and one in the other. Apart from Reception, each class has two age groups. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Very few are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has Healthy Schools status.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Brigstock is an outstanding school. Most pupils make good progress because highly effective leadership and management successfully promote a consistently good quality of teaching and learning. The exciting and innovative curriculum includes motivating, practical topics which are particularly effective in linking skills from different subject areas. Specialist teacher knowledge in art and design and the emphasis on music ensures pupils are particularly successful in these two subjects. Colourful and vibrant displays of work help make the school an attractive learning environment.

Overall attainment has been maintained at above-average levels since the previous inspection. Indeed, attainment in mathematics has risen markedly over the past two years as a result of initiatives such as 'Mathletics' and a greater emphasis on problem solving and is now significantly above the national average. The school's introduction of new strategies to promote better writing skills in Key Stage 2 shows clear signs of success but have not yet had time to take full effect and raise attainment by Year 6. Despite weaker attainment in writing, overall attainment in English is above average. Writing skills are promoted effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Children in Reception benefit from daily sessions to learn letters and their sounds and have good opportunities to write in most activities. However, a scrutiny of the books of older pupils shows that opportunities to write at length in literacy and other subjects are quite limited. This means that pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to practise new skills or consolidate new learning. Furthermore, much of the work produced is not neat enough, with handwriting being untidy for many.

Underpinning consistently good teaching is teachers' effective use of assessment to plan work matching the ability range of pupils in all classes. Higher-attaining pupils are particularly well challenged. Similarly, the high quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities results from support which is expertly tailored to meet individual needs. This has resulted in most making outstanding progress.

Staff provide an exceptionally nurturing environment for pupils, who feel perfectly safe and extremely well cared for. Pupils have excellent social skills and their behaviour is exemplary. Parents and carers in turn are highly satisfied by the school, which maintains an outstanding partnership with them.

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Highly effective leadership results from the strong partnership between all staff and the governing body. All share the same ambition and vision for success. Accurate school self-evaluation and a marked improvement since the previous inspection have seen the number of outstanding aspects more than doubling. As a result, the school has an excellent capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing throughout Key Stage 2 by providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length in lessons.
- Improve the neatness and presentation of pupils' work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils listen attentively and are keen to answer questions in lessons. Their concentration is consistently good and all work hard to complete the tasks set for them. As a result, above-average attainment has become the norm. Almost all pupils make good progress and for some, progress is outstanding as they move through the school.

Standards of attainment are high in mathematics and above average in English. Most pupils attain high standards in reading but the proportion achieving above-average standards in writing is not as high as it is in reading or mathematics. There is little difference in attainment between boys and girls by Year 6. Effective strategies such as Big Write and the emphasis teachers in the junior classes are placing on writing in all subject areas are beginning to narrow the gap between writing skills and those in other subjects. However, there is limited evidence of pupils writing at length in English and other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. Detailed lesson planning ensures that teaching meets their specific learning needs. All receive exceptionally effective support from teachers and from their helpers.

Levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Pupils are polite, and show kindness and consideration for others. Their outstanding behaviour is a key factor in how well they learn in lessons. All thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their consistently above-average attendance. Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them by, for example, attending many of the clubs and sporting activities that the school organises. Most have an excellent understanding of staying fit and healthy, and of how to keep themselves and others safe. The school is an integral part of the local community and pupils enjoy community activities such as the mini-markets organised by parents, their close links with the church, and special occasions such as the Remembrance Day service. Taking on additional responsibilities in school as school councillors and in the local community considerably extends their social development. Pupils gain a thorough

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appreciation of other cultures from curriculum activities, visitors and from strong links with other schools and communities, both locally and internationally. Excellent attitudes to learning and competent skills when using computers ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and learning support assistants have generally high expectations of pupils and are totally committed to meeting their needs. All pupils know their targets for learning and are keen to achieve them. The much improved use of assessment information to inform pupils' next steps in learning is providing pupils with interesting and challenging tasks most of the time. Staff provide good opportunities for pupils to work independently or collaboratively with others in lessons. Year 3 and 4 pupils, for example worked in pairs using books and the internet to research differences between Brigstock and Kumaon in India. Strengths common to most lessons are: the rapport and relationships between staff and pupils; the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and tasks that are closely matched to the different abilities of pupils. Very occasionally, where teaching is less effective, introductions to the whole class are too long and some pupils find tasks too easy.

There is a strong emphasis on maintaining the above-average literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school. Curriculum initiatives to improve writing, such as 'Big write' and incorporating writing activities into topics and other subject areas are successfully motivating pupils to write. They are beginning to yield higher standards

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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but have yet to have their full impact over time. A three-year topic cycle is well established, with exciting topics such as 'Mighty mountains', 'Thrills and Spills' and 'Rise of the Robots'. Pupils enjoy researching and writing in these topics. The curriculum is enhanced by French lessons, opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument, residential visits and extra-curricular clubs in art, Eco warriors, film and dance. The performances in school and the community and success of 'Young voices' add further to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for, guided and supported in a positive atmosphere that enables them to feel safe and become confident. Parents and carers are very positive about how well their children are cared for and looked after by staff. The school works with a wide range of partners with specialist knowledge and expertise. Consequently, provision for the very few pupils who may be more vulnerable is excellent. Their contribution also ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, successfully overcome barriers to learning and make outstanding progress. Transition arrangements into school and between classes are a strength and ensure that pupils settle quickly and make friends. The school promotes attendance successfully and receives excellent support from parents and carers, who clearly value what the school provides each and every day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Teamwork is the school's key to success. The stable staff team benefit from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have, for 10 years, successfully motivated the whole school community to share a common vision and ambition for success. Staff, as a whole, drive forward improvements by evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and their impact every half term. Observations occasionally do not specify strengths and areas to improve clearly enough. Staff morale is high. All share high expectations, a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to ensure every pupil does their very best. Targets set for pupils are challenging and regularly met

The governing body makes a significant contribution to the work and direction of the school. Its members are carefully chosen for their expertise in different areas. They are fully and systematically involved in evaluating the work of the school, including the effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection procedures. Consequently, safeguarding is good. Some minor omissions to the school's records were identified

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and corrected. The school integrates issues about safety into the curriculum, so pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, a point endorsed by their parents and carers in questionnaire responses.

The school makes sure everyone has equal opportunities to succeed. There have been no instances of discrimination or racial intolerance in the last three years. Underachievement of individual pupils and groups is quickly identified and gaps in performance have narrowed considerably.

The school actively promotes community cohesion within the school community and the immediate neighbourhood, where giving concerts, supporting local charities and helping with litter picking give pupils an appreciation of their community and its needs. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about other countries, their traditions and beliefs through planned curriculum projects and international links with schools in China and Eastern Europe. Members of the governing body play a significant role in maintaining the school's outstanding partnership with parents. They ensure that parents and carers are kept exceptionally well-informed about all aspects of their children's achievements, well-being and development, through prompt communications in a wide range of media.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with most of the skills normally expected for their age. Their communication and calculation skills are lower and their personal, social and emotional development is also variable. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that, by the time they enter Year 1, most have achieved the early learning goals, with some exceeding them.

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Children learn, in daily taught sessions, to identify letters and sounds, and practise writing them accurately. Well-planned activities such as writing invitations encourage children to write and they learn to add numbers together in simple 'sums', often using computers to help with this skill. There are many exciting activities for children in the well-equipped learning areas indoors and outside. Boys and girls together enjoyed using a cement mixer and laying bricks to build a strong castle.

Children are confident and happy in this secure and welcoming environment. Their personal, social and emotional development is excellent, shown by their outstanding behaviour and strongly positive relationships with each other and with adults. All are proud of their artwork which adds much to make the classroom an attractive and welcoming learning environment. The outdoor area is small, but staff compensate effectively using the adjacent playground and bug garden which borders an old mill stream.

Planning and assessment are good and ensure all build successfully on prior learning. The safety and welfare of all children has a high profile. The excellent partnership with parents and carers extends to home visits and tailored guidance and information about precise ways in which parents and carers can support their children's learning. Leadership is good and directed towards further improvement, for example to continue to develop learning opportunities in the Bug garden.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all of these hold positive views about the school. Every one who replied, for example, agreed that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and taught how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They unanimously agreed that they are happy with what the school provides for their children. Comments such as 'everything is wonderful' and 'my child comes home enthusiastic and animated at the end of each day' are typical. One parent simply stated 'I love Brigstock Primary School!' Inspectors fully endorse all the positive views of parents and carers. There were a very small number of individual concerns and these are best taken up with the headteacher and staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brigstock Latham's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	80	17	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	86	12	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	60	29	33	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	68	25	29	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	74	21	24	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	67	19	22	8	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	75	22	25	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	59	68	21	24	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	70	18	21	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	74	18	21	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	68	16	18	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	70	80	14	16	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	82	14	16	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



14 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Brigstock Latham's Church of England Primary School,
Kettering, NN14 3HD**

Congratulations to all of you for working so hard and helping your school to improve. The inspectors really enjoyed their visit to your outstanding school. We can see why your parents and carers say that you like school so much. Your teachers and their helpers work hard to make school exciting and a happy place for everyone. All of you behave so well in your lessons and around school. It was good to see how kind and thoughtful you are to one another. Your continued good attendance shows the inspectors how much you enjoy coming to school each day.

All of you are making good progress as you move through the school, achieving above-average standards in English and high standards in mathematics by the time you leave in Year 6. We hope that all the efforts your teachers are making to help more of you achieve higher standards in writing will pay off soon. We are asking your teachers to give you more opportunities to write for longer to improve your skills even more. If you are successful, it will make standards in English as high as they are in mathematics. We were a little disappointed with the untidiness of some of your work, especially your handwriting, so we are asking you and your teachers to make a special effort to improve it.

The youngest of you do well in Reception and have lots of activities to enjoy in the classroom and outside. You did well to build such a strong castle for the King. It was good to see how much you use computers and cameras when you are working and inspectors were delighted with your artwork. We hope you continue to enjoy all your outdoor activities and make even more use of the bug garden.

Inspectors could see how proud you are of your school. Your parents and carers are just as pleased with your school, judging by their comments when we met them and their replies to our questionnaire. We do hope you continue to enjoy school, and help it to improve still further by working just as hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock
Lead inspector

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