

Braintcroft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101532
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	376585
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2012
Lead inspector	Emma Aylesbury

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	768
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Frances
Headteacher	Kim Beat
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 November 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	6–7 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Emma Aylesbury

Additional inspector

Narinder Dohel

Additional inspector

Sarah McDermott

Additional inspector

Nicholas West

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed teaching and learning in 26 lessons or part lessons, amounting to nearly ten hours in total, observing 24 teachers, with 18 being accompanied by a member of the senior management team. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its monitoring, assessment and attendance records, improvement plans, minutes of meetings held by the governing body and safeguarding documents. In addition, they analysed questionnaires from 248 parents and carers, 92 pupils and 40 staff.

Information about the school

Braintcroft Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is well above average, with pupils of Black African heritage forming the largest proportion. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than typically found. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who may have special educational needs is above average. The school meets current floor standards.

The school has gained the Rights Respecting and Healthy Schools awards.

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

- Braintcroft provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Parents and carers say that they are happy with the education their child receives and that they appreciate the school’s efforts to promote good behaviour around the school.
- Results in national tests are below average, although there is a clear upward trend in attainment. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time from low starting points. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good gains in their early reading, social, creative and physical development.
- Parents, carers, pupils and staff say behaviour has improved over time. Pupils are keen to learn and get on well together. They show positive attitudes towards learning and want to do their best. Effective safeguarding contributes well to pupils’ safety, engagement and enjoyment of school.
- The quality of teaching, while improving, is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless, the higher expectations and the consistency of challenge provided for more-able pupils is often the difference between good and satisfactory teaching. Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to develop their key writing skills within different subjects.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher’s vision for the school is clear and well defined. However, not all teaching is monitored regularly and, as a result, the impact of improvements in teaching is not fully evaluated by leaders.

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

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching through the school by September 2012 through:
 - ensuring that work set in lessons consistently challenges all pupils fully, especially the more able
 - widening opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy skills in other subjects across the curriculum
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to use and review their writing targets in all subjects.
- Sharpen and improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels in driving improvement by July 2012 through:
 - ensuring new strategies to improve teaching are monitored regularly against clear guidelines for improvement
 - working more closely with all staff to identify those factors that will improve teaching the most.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school with skill levels that are low for their age, especially in their personal, social, literacy, language and communication skills. As a result of good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children achieve well and are well prepared to start Year 1. This is because of the clear emphasis on systematic teaching of letters and sounds, and the rapid development of their communication and social skills. For example, in the Reception class, children were observed confidently talking in pairs about what materials they might need to build Cinderella's carriage. Similarly, in the Nursery class, children made good progress when they demonstrated their knowledge of 'incy wincy spider' by making spiders out of wool and then by counting their legs, which developed good number and social skills.

The quality of pupils' learning and progress is satisfactory. Better targeting of pupils' learning needs in Years 1 and 2 has resulted in their improving levels of reading competence. By the end of Year 2, children make satisfactory progress in reading, but reach below-average levels. However, as pupils move through the school, progress accelerates so that by the end of Year 6 almost all boys and girls are reading confidently and reach the standard expected for their age. This is a result of the implementation of a systematic reading scheme. Nevertheless, pupils' progress in writing is still relatively slow, but recent focus on this area is beginning to narrow the

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gap between pupils' performance and the levels expected. For example, in Year 2, pupils enjoyed role-playing characters from *Cinderella* and used the experience to develop their writing about the 'ugly stepmother'. Similarly in Year 6, pupils discussed the main themes of the story seriously, and wrote convincing and persuasive articles for a class/imaginary newspaper.

Although pupils' progress increases, their attainment remains low by the end of Year 6. National test results indicate that boys learn better than girls in mathematics. However, this gap is narrowing through the use of strategies such as targeted one-to-one tuition and engaging girl-friendly strategies such as opportunities for discussion and reasoning. Carefully planned provision for pupils who are disabled and for those who may have special educational needs ensures they receive the help and support they need to make similar progress to that of other pupils. Those many pupils from Black African heritages and those who speak English as an additional language make similarly satisfactory progress as staff provide practical activities using pictures, key words and books to help give clues to recognise unfamiliar words in group and class activities. The majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires and spoke to inspectors expressed satisfaction with the progress their children make, which the inspection findings confirm.

Quality of teaching

Teaching over time is satisfactory, with some particularly effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Evidence from lessons, the school's checks on pupils' progress and scrutiny of learners' work suggests that teaching is improving. Typically, teaching develops positive relationships between pupils and adults and promotes the effective use of teaching assistants. For example, in Reception, teaching assistants skilfully guided children working in pairs on the 'ar' sound, making 26 words in 10 minutes. Parents and carers hold similar and mainly positive views about the quality of teaching their children receive.

The school has focused on improving pupils' communication skills. This was observed in a Year 4 activity, where pupils, with their talk partners, discussed the issues surrounding fund raising for charities. Similarly in Year 6, pupils used technology well to interview each other when they were role-playing being a journalist reporting on a story. The way the school is starting to make better links across different subjects within the curriculum means that pupils follow a broad range of subjects which complement each other. For example, art and literacy combined successfully when pupils studied the life of the Egyptians. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weaved skilfully within everyday topics. The 'Big Write' initiative is focusing on reinforcing learning and is improving pupils' writing skills within specific English activities. Assessment routines are regular and enable detailed and accurate tracking of pupils' progress, which allows valuable modifications to activities for pupils falling short of expectations for their age to be made. Where teaching is less effective, it is generally because teachers do not stretch the learning of more-able pupils, or provide opportunities for extended writing activities across the curriculum, not just within English-based activities. Although writing targets are set, they are not

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reviewed regularly enough to make sure all pupils make better progress. Parents and carers believe that teaching has improved recently, although inspection findings indicate that, while there has been improvement, it is not yet consistently good through the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a safe and caring environment. Pupils work well with each other and their relationships with adults are mature. Pupils show respect for adults and address them in a polite and friendly manner. Nevertheless, a small minority of pupils need regular support to behave well; this is provided effectively and there is little disruption to lessons. Pupils are keen to learn in lessons. Their good behaviour contributes well to their enjoyment of activities and they respond well to their teachers. Most pupils and parents and carers are of the view that behaviour has improved over time. However, a small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the level of behaviour found in the school and the way it is dealt with. Inspection evidence clearly indicates that, over time, pupils' behaviour is good.

Since the previous inspection, attendance has improved and is now above average. School records show that instances of different types of bullying are rare. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including how to stay safe using the internet. Parents and carers also reported that they are confident that the school systems are sufficiently robust to deal with any instances of internet abuse, should they occur.

Leadership and management

Actions to raise pupils' attainment and to close gaps between that of different groups is starting to take effect. Senior leaders have acted in response to pupils making slower progress at times by implementing coaching programmes for staff and, as a result, the quality of teaching is improving. Middle managers and senior leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, but the monitoring of teaching over time is not always systematic enough in ensuring the sharing of good practice and in evaluating what will make teaching consistently more effective through the school.

Leaders promote equal opportunities well, as demonstrated in the narrowing of the gap in the achievement of Black African pupils with that of all pupils and by ensuring all pupils have opportunities to have access to a range of opportunities within the school. Leaders address quickly, and do not tolerate, any instances of discrimination. Consequently, pupils' achievement is improving.

The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and there is effective emphasis placed on learning key literacy and numeracy skills, although writing is relatively underdeveloped in other subjects. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is securely promoted. A good example is where pupils design their own Charter for their 'rights-respecting school' initiatives, which has encouraged them to think

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carefully about their own rights and how their actions affect others. Opportunities to develop leadership skills through work as a class monitor or as a member of the pupil council enables pupils to contribute to the leadership of school life.

Thorough and effective procedures for carrying out risk assessments and implementing safeguarding policies ensure pupils' safety is high profile. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory guidelines and checks on staff appointments are rigorous. Governors are increasingly holding the school to account for recent low academic performance and are starting to become more demanding of senior leaders in terms of raising the school's effectiveness. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved attendance and aspects of teaching and has raised pupils' behaviour levels. These actions demonstrate the school has the necessary capacity to improve.

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.



8 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Braintcroft Primary School, Neasden, London NW2 7LL

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly greeting you gave to all of the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Many of you chatted with us and were very polite, which made us feel welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do and the improvements in your school.

You go to a satisfactory and improving school. This means some things the school does well and others it needs to improve. It looks after you well and makes good provision for you to develop so that your behaviour is good. It has a friendly atmosphere because of the way you interact with each other and with adults. The activities provided in the curriculum help you to learn key skills, although they do not always help you to improve your writing in other subjects. Your behaviour and attitudes within your lessons are good.

We can see that your school is improving, but there are still some inconsistencies which stop it from being better. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- make sure your lessons challenge you to achieve as well as you can, in particular those of you who are capable of doing harder work
- provide you with more opportunities to achieve your writing targets and use your literacy skills in all subjects.

You can help too by trying to produce your very best work, especially when using your writing within other subjects.

Yours sincerely

Emma Aylesbury
Lead inspector

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