



# James Brindley School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 131473  
**LEA** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 282214  
**Inspection dates** 10 November 2005 to 11 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mick Megee AI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Bell Barn Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Edgbaston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19		Birmingham, West Midlands B15 2AF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 666 6409
<b>Number on roll</b>	580	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 666 6956
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Judith Coulson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynne John

---

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10 November 2005 - 11 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 282214
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

James Brindley School educates pupils who are unable to attend ordinary schools because of health reasons. The school has 12 sites in hospitals and designated units. Most pupils come from Birmingham but a few are from further afield. All have physical or mental health needs which have slowed down their learning and many have additional difficulties such as autism. The students are from a very wide range of backgrounds. Almost every ethnic group is represented but two thirds are from white British backgrounds, and about one sixth are Pakistani.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The James Brindley School gives its pupils, including the few pupils in the Foundation Stage, an outstanding education. The school identified many strengths before the inspection, and judged its own effectiveness as good. The inspection team believes that the school is even better than this. One parent wrote to say that the school is 'a godsend to me and my son'. The headteacher and senior staff have many excellent ideas for further ways to improve. They work very hard to make sure that pupils achieve their best and are happy and confident. Teaching is outstanding. All staff expect great things from the pupils and the pupils respond to the challenge and rarely disappoint. Therapists and classroom and nursing staff work very effectively together to identify each pupil's particular needs. Pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, achieve very well because they receive expert help and a broad range of rich experiences. Parents overwhelmingly support everything the school does. They are grateful for the many extra steps which all the staff take.

The school has a very strong capacity to improve further and this is demonstrated by the transformations which have taken place since the last report. Standards have continued to rise, self-assessment is effective, design and technology have been substantially improved, the accommodation is now at least satisfactory and on some sites, such as Ardenleigh, it is first class. However, not all pupils work in good quality surroundings. The school does not use comparative information to check up that all groups of pupils, for example those with different special educational needs, achieve to their best capability. The school provides excellent value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Work with the LEA to improve the accommodation even more so that all pupils work in an environment which is comfortable and suitable.
- Make regular checks to see if all groups of pupils are achieving as much as they can.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

The pupils' achievement is outstanding, regardless of their age, ability or gender. When they are referred, most pupils have missed a significant amount of schooling and so standards are very low when compared to the national average. Straight away the school makes sure it obtains complete records so that the pupils and staff can hit the ground running and set realistic targets from day one. The longer they are in school, the more the pupils gain in confidence and the higher their achievement. Staff are very careful to keep track of how well each pupil is doing in each lesson, and this helps the pupils to reach their personal social goals quickly. Nearly all those who spend all of Years 10 and 11 in the school obtain excellent results in GCSE and GNVQ, and in programmes like 'Preparation for Working Life'. One parent spoke of the difference that the school has made to her son's achievement, 'Without the school, I don't know what would have happened to my son. He now has an education and a future'.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and their behaviour is excellent. Staff ensure that pupils become socially and morally responsible. Relationships everywhere in the school are very good and pupils quickly become confident, respectful and mature. Pupils' cultural and spiritual understanding is very effectively awakened and nurtured through activities such as a Remembrance week and residential trips to London. There are very strong bonds between pupils, no matter how different their backgrounds, and they are very sensitive to each other's problems. Almost all the pupils have a very positive attitude to their work and leisure activities. A few are less enthusiastic about the challenge and the hard work expected of them, but this is often because of their particular mental or physical health needs. Gradually they learn how to manage or even overcome these difficulties. Pupils are very successful in their work experience, and these opportunities sometimes lead to real employment. They are taught what to do if they are in vulnerable situations and how to make sensible lifestyle choices. Pupils have many opportunities to help in the community, for example through fundraising for a cancer trust or for victims of the Asian tsunami. They make gifts which they take to care homes for the elderly. Some pupils are currently organising a talent show to raise money for Children in Need. Attendance is good and great efforts are made to encourage all pupils to attend school as much as they can.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils do so well in their lessons because all staff work very well together to provide an education of consistently high quality. Senior staff observe lessons very regularly and provide comprehensive feedback to teachers to help them further improve. Pupils are very clear about what they are expected to do and learn. Teachers know their subjects really well and have the versatility to meet the needs of all the pupils whether they have learning difficulties or are especially talented. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Teaching is outstanding and teachers often make excellent use of computers and videos. Pupils in bed in an isolation ward can access and view their lessons on a laptop. Often pupils use video conferencing to communicate with other pupils in the school or abroad. One Kosovan pupil was able to talk to people from her own village whom she had not seen for over a year. In science, pupils are able to link up with NASA and in geography observe a live link with a dive off the Great Barrier Reef.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is excellent. Each pupil receives a stimulating and individualised education at James Brindley. Every pupil has access to high quality opportunities to

learn, wherever they are based. The school operates a very flexible curriculum which ensures that even though many pupils are at the school for only a short while, pupils do not miss anything when they return to mainstream education. School life is enhanced by many extra activities, like theatre trips. The school aims that 'no pupils should miss out due to ill-health'; so professional artists, musicians and local historians are frequent visitors in the classrooms or wards. Special kits are prepared which enable design technology activities to take place on hospital wards. Pupils are well prepared for the future through vocational studies, such as childcare studies and hairdressing and the innovative 'employability' programme. There are very good links with local employers, such as Jaguar cars and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding level of support for pupils' personal development. It places the individual pupil at the heart of everything. All pupils have a personalised plan of activities and targets precisely matched to their needs and interests. Academic and social progress are continually assessed. The school creates a warm, family environment in which the pupils are kept safe and flourish. Staff go out of their way to allay or confront the pupils' anxieties, by gentle guidance and continual family contact or by calling in specialists if required. There are many opportunities for the pupils' social, leisure and physical development, including yoga, football, aerobics, basketball and contemporary dance. The pupils are provided with very good careers guidance and support, including work-experience placements that are very well tailored to each individual's needs. These include tyre-fitting, working in a children's clothing shop, a pharmacy and a police dog training centre.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management at James Brindley School are outstanding. The headteacher carries out her duties with inspiration and exceptional conscientiousness and expertise. She receives wholehearted support from governors and from the senior leadership group who share her passion and commitment to the school. Together the governors, headteacher and senior staff have led significant school improvements. They aspire to much more and their capacity to improve is outstanding. They have effective systems for self-evaluation. As part of this, the school regularly seeks and takes into account the views of parents, staff and pupils, as well as the community, health and social services with whom strong links have been forged.

All staff work to achieve common aims, and have their performance regularly appraised. However, managers have not compared the achievement made by different groups of pupils. This is to check that no group is at a disadvantage. Innovations come thick and fast at the school. The unit at Ardenleigh was planned and designed by the school leaders in partnership with health trust managers. The accommodation is extremely good. It is an example of national best practice in providing support and education to

young people who have serious mental health difficulties. The school has partnerships with influential companies like Microsoft, which it uses very well to the benefit of the pupils. The quality of the accommodation has come a long way since the last inspection. It is now satisfactory, but there is a lot more to be done on some of the school's sites. Resources are very well managed and excellent value for money is achieved. Governance of the school is outstanding. The governing body and its supporting committees keep themselves very well informed, give the school a very clear steer and make challenging demands on the senior staff to drive the school forward.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

James Brindley School Bell Barn Road Birmingham B15 2AF

14 November 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for talking to us and helping us to do our job. We really enjoyed seeing your work and talking to you. A special thanks to those on the school council who met us and who explained so clearly what you think about your school and all the very good things it does.

This is what we found out about your school:

- it is a great place to learn and you are given a first-class education there
- the senior staff, like your headteacher, are very skilful in the way they organise the school and in making sure everything is done to enable you to enjoy learning
- the teachers are very good at their jobs and you get on especially well with them
- all the school and hospital staff, as well as staff from outside, work really well as a team for your benefit
- most of you like the lessons and different activities that are set up for you
- your mums and dads really appreciate the school and what it does for you.

Although some of you on the school council said that you did not enjoy everything at school, we feel that is because you have to work hard even if you don't feel up to it.

There are one or two things which the school could do to make it even better:

- the governors, the senior managers and the local authority should get their heads together and make sure that all pupils have their lessons in comfortable, up-to-date surroundings
- the headteacher ought to make absolutely sure that all groups of pupils, whatever their background or ability, are making the best progress they can.

Yours sincerely, Dr Mick Megee Lead Inspector