

# Castle Bromwich Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104067
<b>Local Authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	308499
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Barter

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	437
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deb Mandell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caz Jude
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Green Lane Castle Bromwich Birmingham B36 0BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01217 473369
<b>Fax number</b>	01217 492466

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<b>Age group</b>	3-7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of the Foundation Stage provision; the effectiveness of strategies to ensure that pupils, particularly boys and the more able, achieve as well as they can; and how well the leadership evaluates the school's performance to develop the school further. Evidence was collected from discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, teachers, parents and pupils; lesson observations; scrutiny of pupils' work; and analysis of assessment data. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a very large infant school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. One-tenth of the school population is from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds; a small proportion of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Children start school in the Nursery or in Reception with skills and abilities that are below the levels expected for their age, particularly with regard to their personal, social and emotional development.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Castle Bromwich Infant School provides pupils with an outstanding quality of education where they are helped to develop well academically and personally. The school's many strengths are the result of outstanding leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher and her deputy are exemplary role models and their commitment and enthusiasm inspire all adults working in the school to provide a very good quality of education for the pupils. All members of staff and the governing body, work hard towards the same goal of helping pupils achieve to the best of their ability. The school is modest in evaluating its own effectiveness because it strives constantly to improve further. Already judged 'a very good school' at the previous inspection, it has gone from strength to strength and has excellent capacity to continue to do so.

Parents hold the school in highest regard. Many remark on the caring, nurturing atmosphere and the excellent teaching which help their children to make such outstanding progress in their learning. 'My children are thriving at school due to fantastic teaching and the way learning is made fun and exciting,' and 'Castle Bromwich is a wonderful school that encourages children to think,' are just two comments which are typical of many others made.

Excellent progress starts in the Nursery and Reception Year because children acquire very good learning habits and routines from an early age. From this very positive start, pupils make outstanding progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach standards, which are consistently above average by the end of Year 2. All pupils do exceedingly well because the school tracks each individual's progress very carefully and ensures that support is given to those who find learning more difficult or who have personal circumstances which affect their progress. The school is never complacent and questions its own practice rigorously, such as the way that it dealt with some pupils' significant behaviour difficulties which caused standards to dip slightly in 2007. The school's own assessments show that these difficulties were overcome successfully and that pupils are well on course to reach above-average standards again this year.

Pupils achieve extremely well because teaching is of consistently high quality in every class. Teachers plan interesting, lively lessons so learners of all ages work enthusiastically and with a sense of purpose. Pupils develop confidence and independence in their learning because they have strong relationships with adults and know that they will get help if they need it. The teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants and their use of information about pupils' work to plan the next steps for learning are significant strengths and have a direct impact on pupils' outstanding achievement. Although its curriculum is already good, the school recognises the need to provide pupils, particularly boys, with even more creative opportunities to learn which stimulate their interest and imagination. It has made a good start, such as in the Year 2 lessons when pupils 'jumped into' an interactive whiteboard picture of the Great Fire of London and imagined how people would have felt when trying to escape in boats. This exciting role-play helped pupils of all abilities to tackle their writing about the fire with interest and enthusiasm. Opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects are very good, but are not yet planned regularly enough to develop their numeracy skills in the same way.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Extremely strong and warm relationships ensure that all pupils thrive and flourish. They thoroughly enjoy school and contribute to the happy atmosphere. 'Teachers make learning interesting and fun,' and 'We've got nice teachers and they help to keep us safe,' are typical comments made by pupils. Pupils

feel safe and develop a striking degree of self-confidence. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils willingly take turns and share and they respect each other. They speak maturely to adults about their school and are very proud of their work. Pupils behave extremely well because they clearly understand the rules, and adults help them sensitively to overcome any personal difficulties. Pupils willingly take on responsibility in their class and school council and are very keen to help others, such as helping to put out toys for younger children at playtime. They understand the need to look after their bodies by eating healthy food and exercising regularly. Attendance is satisfactory and improving because of the good work with parents to help them understand the importance of children's regular attendance at school.

The school gives outstanding care, guidance and support. It has effective systems to protect pupils and uses positive partnerships with parents and outside agencies to support those who are vulnerable. Pupils know that there is an adult they can turn to if they have a problem, confident that it will always be sorted out. Pupils who have social and emotional difficulties receive very good care and guidance in small nurture groups. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very effective support in class and through carefully planned individual and group work. Targets for these pupils are precise and their progress meticulously monitored so that they make rapid gains in their learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also progress very well because teaching staff support them effectively in the classroom. Pupils receive good help to improve their work through frequent discussions with teachers and hints on the next steps to improve their work in their books. Pupils feel encouraged by this so that they are happy to 'have a go' when something is difficult and ask for help when they are stuck. The school has excellent relationships with parents and works hard to help them understand how to support their children's learning at home. All of this results in pupils who are very keen to learn and are exceptionally well equipped for the move to junior school.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children make excellent progress throughout the two years of the Foundation Stage because teaching is of a consistently high quality. Staff work very well together in highly effective teams. They understand how young children learn, carefully observe and monitor their progress and plan carefully to ensure that children experience everything they need to grow and develop. They are highly skilled at engaging children with enticing activities, which encourage them to explore and to learn for themselves, such as rolling marbles in paint across autumn leaves, selling food in the attractive Chinese takeaway and feeling the sensations of a flour-and-water mix with their fingers. The building blocks for children's literacy and mathematical skills are put firmly in place in everything they do and this has a significant impact on the progress children make later on. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Many lack social and emotional maturity when they start school but they become happy and independent learners through the sensitive encouragement they receive. Children behave very well and learn to play with and help each other. Their welfare is of utmost importance to staff and children feel confident as a result. This safe, friendly and supportive environment enables all children to flourish and most meet their early learning goals at the end of Foundation Stage. Parents speak very highly of the staffing and leadership of the Foundation Stage, commenting how well their children are helped to settle and how they make 'fantastic progress' as a result.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build on the start made to develop a more creative curriculum to engage pupils' learning even further and give them regular opportunities to practise their basic skills, particularly in numeracy.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Dear Children

Inspection of Castle Bromwich Infant School, West Midlands, B36 0BX

I would like to thank you all for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. It was such a pleasure to see you working so hard, behaving well and really enjoying being at school. You should be very proud of your school because it is an excellent place to be!

These are some of the really great things about your school:

- Because you work very hard and learn so well, you do much better than most other children of your age.
- You are sensible and caring children. You know how to look after yourselves, respect others and be kind.
- Your teachers work really well together to make sure that you learn everything you should and that you get all the help you need.
- The adults make sure you enjoy learning interesting and new things. The children in Nursery and Reception have great fun and lots of exciting things to do.
- Everybody really cares for you and makes sure you are well and happy.
- All the adults want the very best for you. They work very, very hard to make sure that Castle Bromwich Infant School is one of the best schools there is.

Even though your school keeps on getting better and better, and you and your parents are very happy, it wants to do even more to help you! To help them a little bit, I have asked them to give you even more exciting ways of learning; just like you were doing when you were pretending to be in the picture of the Great Fire of London and were imagining rowing away in a boat with just a lantern to see by! You can help by telling teachers how much you enjoy these activities and by always working as hard as you possibly can. I know you will because I have seen how much you enjoy learning and coming to school.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Barter Lead Inspector

31 October 2007

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