

Branston Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120403
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358757
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Brown

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Plant
Headteacher	Rachael Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed thirteen lessons and seven teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, teachers, a teaching assistant and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at safeguarding arrangements, as well as other information including development planning, schemes of work, policies, procedures and a range of pupils' books. A total of 76 questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised, together with nine from staff and 99 from pupils.

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

- How much progress do pupils make in Key Stage 2?
- How do the curriculum and teaching meet the needs of all pupils?
- What opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about different cultures in Britain?

Information about the school

This below-average-sized school serves the local community and surrounding villages. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other heritages are represented, although the numbers in each group are small and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of girls is well above average. An average proportion of pupils are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Amongst its national awards, the school has Artsmark Gold. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher it provides a caring and supportive environment for pupils and their families and is an important part of its village community.

Attendance levels are high. Pupils make steady progress in their academic work as they move through the school and their attainment is above average when they leave. Teachers' planning shows that they adapt the work for groups of pupils of differing ability, but this is not always firmly based on an assessment of pupils' capabilities. Sometimes the work is too hard or too easy for individuals within the groups, or pupils are not sure how to improve their work. There are periods in lessons where the pace of learning slows. Pupils do not always use the skills they have learned in English and mathematics lessons as well as they could in the other subjects they study.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and co-operative with one another. Pupils mix well socially and have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. They lead active lives and are clear about how to live a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Opportunities for pupils to engage with others outside the school who are from backgrounds different from their own are in their infancy. Every parent or carer responding to the questionnaire felt that their child was safe in school, and the great majority of pupils agreed. Pupils know who to turn to for help, and are confident that any concerns they have will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively. The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support.

The school has made steady progress since it was last inspected, demonstrating satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The school's senior leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the most important areas for improvement, and have drawn up appropriate plans to address them. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate. The school has rightly focused on improving teaching and, in particular, any inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Pupils are now starting to organise themselves to tackle questions on their own or as part of a group exercise but their independent learning skills are not yet well developed.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress made by pupils and raise attainment by ensuring that teachers consistently:

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- have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and communicate this to them by regular feedback
- use assessment information to set work that is closely matched to pupils' abilities
- make sure all phases of a lesson challenge and engage pupils.
- Develop the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all the pupils by:
 - expanding the opportunities for them to apply their literacy and mathematical skills across all subjects in the curriculum
 - increasing the extent to which pupils use independent learning skills
 - raising pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own, in Britain and around the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The school's performance in the national English and mathematics tests for pupils in Year 6 has been above average in recent years. Girls did less well than boys in 2010, particularly in mathematics. Taken overall, pupils' attainment on entry is above that expected for their age. The school builds soundly on these favourable starting points of many pupils. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 and the school's assessment records, show that they are on track to maintain above average levels of attainment. There is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

The learning observed in lessons was satisfactory. Pupils enjoyed the topics and concentrated well at the start of lessons. They worked together effectively, readily pooling their thoughts and developing ideas with the rest of their group. Pupils' interest waned if the introduction went on for too long. Once in their ability groups, their enthusiasm for learning was more evident. They worked quickly, and were keen to solve problems or get to the end of their task. In some lessons, progress slowed when opportunities to check and improve pupils' understanding were missed. Where learning was best, for example in a good Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher's brisk and probing questioning ensured that a very close check was kept of pupils' understanding of complex addition and subtraction. Any misunderstanding was corrected quickly.

Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibility, for example, by joining the school council or becoming house captains. The school council recently chose new playground equipment and markings. The school is an important presence at many of the traditional village events and festivals. Pupils are becoming more influential in issues that affect the wider local area. Their good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles is reflected in the school's Activemark status. Pupils have a good range of skills and personal qualities which equip them well for their future education. For example, every class takes responsibility for running the healthy food tuck shop on a rota basis.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve are generally satisfactory but sometimes are not high enough. They ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and, some, but not all, teachers, review pupils' learning at regular points during the lesson to keep challenge appropriate. Teachers and teaching assistants work soundly together to meet pupils' needs, particularly those who find learning difficult or who have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' assessments and marking of pupils' work are satisfactory. The school recognises that inconsistencies remain, and is working appropriately to eliminate them.

The school's joint curriculum work with the neighbouring infant and secondary schools is sound. A satisfactory curriculum builds on pupils' previous learning and prepares them for the next stages of their education. New technologies such as interactive whiteboards are used effectively in some lessons to engage pupils' interest. Themed days and weeks are a regular feature of the curriculum and these enhance pupils' enjoyment. For example, an outdoor activity week helped pupils learn about adventurous activities and team building. A good range of sporting and musical activities, visits and visitors extend the curriculum. Parents, carers and pupils are confident that they will be looked after. At present, pupils do not receive sufficient effective academic guidance.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is committed to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, and is tracking each pupil's progress towards adequately challenging targets. The headteacher is keen to make improvements and staff share her vision. She and other leaders monitor the quality of lessons, scrutinise pupils' work, and review teachers' planning. These activities provide a broad overview of the teaching, but they are not frequent enough or focused sharply on the impact on pupils' learning and progress. An evaluation of pupils' progress is conveyed to the governing body through the headteacher's informative reports. Progress towards targets within the school development plan also forms part of the headteacher's report to the governing body. Several governors have joined in the last two years and the committee structure has been reorganised. The governing body provides sound strategic direction and challenge.

The school works well with parents and carers and keeps them well informed. For example, regular newsletters keep them abreast of activities in the school, and the school's website is friendly in tone and accessible. Links and partnerships with agencies ensure sound support for pupils who have specific needs. The school and the pupils also benefit from partnerships with other schools in the area. Systems to safeguard pupils are rigorous, risk assessments are good, and careful checks are made of the suitability of adults to work with children. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. A thorough audit of community cohesion provision has been completed and the school is aware of the need to engage better with groups outside the school and the immediate community.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A higher proportion of parents and carers than usual returned questionnaires. The very large majority of responses were positive about most areas of the school's work. A very small minority did not feel that their children were making enough progress or that teaching was good enough. Inspectors investigated the quality of teaching and have asked the headteacher to take steps to accelerate the progress made by pupils.

In addition, a few parents and carers expressed written concerns but there was no common theme among them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Branston Junior 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 171 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	50	34	45	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	47	38	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	36	43	57	4	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	37	34	45	8	11	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	24	32	41	54	8	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	32	47	62	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	37	47	62	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)	20	26	47	62	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	30	44	58	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	28	44	58	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	30	42	55	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	46	35	46	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	39	38	50	4	5	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Branston Junior School, Lincoln, LN4 1LH

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for completing the questionnaire with your views. A special thank you goes to those who met with us. Your views have been very helpful.

The school is providing a satisfactory education for you. Teaching is sound and leads to your making satisfactory progress and reaching above average standards. You are happy and feel safe at school. Your attendance rate is much higher than in most schools. Well done, and please keep it up. Most of the pupils behaved well in the lessons we visited.

Your headteacher, staff and governors are determined for the school to become better. We have asked your teachers to use their knowledge of how well you are doing to give you work that you can do, makes you think and makes you work hard. We have also asked them to give you the chance to use English and mathematics more in other lessons. Do find out all you can about the way that people from different cultures live their lives.

I hope the steps I have asked the school to take will result in everyone doing very well in every lesson. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Brown

Lead inspector

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