

Castle Bromwich Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104066
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	355515
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Heywood
Headteacher	Ian Backhouse
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors, one of whom visited the school for half a day specifically to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. The inspectors observed 20 teachers and visited 25 lessons, including some observations with a specific focus on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior managers, some of the teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and pupils. They looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 47 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- To what extent is the school able to prove its claim that, overall, pupils make good progress, and is the below average performance in 2010 of White and Black Caribbean pupils in mathematics typical or specific to this cohort of pupils?
- How effective has the school been in improving the quality of teaching since its last inspection, particularly in ensuring that the work given to pupils matches their needs?
- How skilled are middle-level leaders in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility, and what is their impact on pupils' achievement?

Information about the school

This is a large junior school. A very large majority of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Most of these pupils have general learning difficulties, including speech, language and communication, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. As a result of significant changes in staffing over the past few years, the members of the middle leadership team are all relatively new to their posts. In addition to the 16 class teachers, the school employs both full and part-time teachers who provide extra support for pupils in English and mathematics. The school has a range of awards and accreditations; the most recent of these is the International School Award in recognition of its work with a global dimension.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Castle Bromwich Junior is a good school. It is also a highly inclusive school in which all pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. It demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement through an accurate appraisal of its own effectiveness and the success of its work in improving pupils' learning since its last inspection. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils and ensures that they achieve well through good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. As a result, standards in English and mathematics are above average.

The pupils clearly know how to keep safe, and show a good understanding of the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle. These achievements are recognised in the school's Activemark accreditation and Healthy School Status. Pupils' well developed social skills, together with their eagerness to learn and frequently good behaviour in lessons, provide a secure platform for good learning to take place. The school is effective in ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the next phase of education and for a future as life-long learners. It does this by placing a strong focus on ensuring that they have a secure grasp of basic skills in English and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The key to this is skilled teaching coupled with rigorous monitoring of their performance. Pupils identified as making less than expected progress are given extra help in small 'booster groups' taught by additional teachers. This additional teaching support also benefits all other pupils because class sizes for lessons in English and mathematics are reduced.

A further important factor in the good progress made by pupils is the clear understanding that pupils have about their targets for improvement. All of the pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire were in full agreement with the statement, 'I know how well I am doing at school'. A noteworthy feature of 'booster groups' is the pupils' understanding of the level they have attained and of precisely what they have to do to move to the next level.

Pupils are attentive and play a full part in lessons. This occurs because teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what is expected of them, and are skilled at developing pupils' confidence by reviewing previous learning before moving on to something new. Teachers carefully ensure that they provide different challenges for pupils, according to their levels of ability. Another reason for pupils' good learning is the good quality of academic guidance provided by teachers in lessons, often through skilled use of questions. However, the guidance provided through teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. There are many examples of useful comments made by teachers in pupils' books, but little evidence of pupils acting on the advice or completing corrections. Although teachers are generally good at motivating pupils through their explanations, they often miss opportunities to make learning even more interesting through the use of information and communication

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technology (ICT). Teachers do not exploit the potential of interactive whiteboards in classrooms and do not ensure that pupils make use of ICT as a day-to-day tool for learning.

The school's ongoing work to develop a 'creative curriculum' successfully injects extra enjoyment into learning through the relevance of first-hand experiences. Links with other schools, both locally and in other countries, are also effective in broadening pupils' horizons. Cross-curricular topics are planned carefully in order to ensure that teachers retain a clear focus on the subject-specific skills that need to be developed within the topics. However, teachers sometimes do not place enough focus on developing pupils' literacy during topic work. In some instances, teachers do not use the range of techniques employed in teaching English or mathematics as effectively when teaching other subjects.

The improvements made in all aspects of provision demonstrate the effective leadership provided by the headteacher and his senior staff. The governors fulfil their role well by providing good support and effective challenge. The middle-level leaders provide satisfactory rather than good leadership. This is because they have yet to develop the full range of skills required for their roles. In particular, they do not place enough focus on pupils' learning when monitoring their areas of responsibility.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning, so that it becomes consistently good or better, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - follow the guidance set out in the school's marking policy and make sure that pupils act on the comments made in their books
 - make more imaginative use of ICT as a day-to-day tool to enhance pupils' interest and enjoyment of lessons
 - make better use of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy during topic work and use the range of the effective skills they employ in teaching English and mathematics when teaching other subjects.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders so that they clearly focus their monitoring on the quality of pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

It was clear from the lessons observed during the inspection that all groups of pupils learn well. An analysis of data suggested that pupils of Caribbean heritage did not do quite as well as their peers nationally in the 2010 national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 6. However, in the lessons seen, these pupils were progressing at the same rate as their classmates. Pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities also make good progress in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. Through regular small group tuition they benefit greatly from teaching that is carefully focused on their individual learning needs. As well as the effective use of additional teachers in all year groups, pupils in Years 3 and 4 also benefit from the additional support provided by skilled teaching assistants, who help ensure their full inclusion in lessons. For example, in a Year 3 lesson about letter writing, the teaching assistant took charge of a group of six pupils once the teacher had introduced and explained the task. For this small group, there was no hiding place from

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learning as the teaching assistant ensured that each individual was fully involved in discussions and in an exercise to analyse a passage of text.

Since only three quarters of the pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire felt that behaviour is good, inspectors looked very closely at pupils' conduct. Discussions with pupils revealed that their concerns generally relate to a small minority with clearly identified behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The behaviour of these, and all pupils, is monitored very carefully and all incidents are rigorously logged. Inspectors judged that pupils behave well overall, both in lessons and at play.

Pupils' social development is good. They contribute well to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. There is an active school council, and pupils show responsibility in carrying out tasks, for instance when preparing the hall for assemblies or as 'eco rangers'. Pupils also have a positive impact on their local community, and a good awareness of local issues, such as those raised by a summer term traffic survey carried out by pupils currently in Year 6. Pupils also have a good understanding of the needs of others who are less fortunate, through activities such as fundraising for a wide range of charities. Some of their activities have a high profile. For instance, pupils' recent work on 'Green Day' was shared with the local Member of Parliament. All of the parents who completed the inspection questionnaire felt that their children enjoy school, and discussions with pupils confirmed this view. This is also borne out by pupils' good rates of attendance and punctuality. There is a clear moral code within the school, and pupils know right from wrong. Pupils' awareness of diversity within our society and of other cultural traditions is good. This stems from the success of the school in making good links with a local special school and with a school with a high proportion of pupils of Asian heritage. Pupils' developing global perspective, gained through contacts with schools in other parts of the world was celebrated recently through the International School award.

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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	2
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	2
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?

The teaching observed was good in all of the lessons focused on additional support for pupils in English and mathematics, and in the majority of class lessons. There was no inadequate teaching. Teachers display many good technical skills. These include the effective management and organisation of their lessons based on well-established routines. In the large majority of lessons teachers ensure a crisp pace of learning. They do this by setting clear time scales for the completion of tasks and by periodically reviewing pupils' progress and clarifying any points raised by the pupils. However, in a small number of lessons the pace of learning is too slow. When this occurs, pupils quickly lose interest and become restless. The few cases of misbehaviour, usually by boys, occurred in these lessons. Teachers' planning is generally good, and is adapted as required to reflect their ongoing assessments of pupils' learning. Teachers creditably focus strongly on the content of pupils' work, but too often neglect poor presentation and handwriting.

The richness of the curriculum lies in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils and in the on-going development of a thematic approach to learning. Examples of the way in which the school helps meet particular needs through its extra-curricular provision are seen in the 'news group', which provides additional and enjoyable challenges specifically for higher-attaining writers, and the ICT homework club. The integral use of first-hand experiences as diverse as coin making, a visit to Castle Bromwich Hall gardens, or the Year 6 'wartime evacuation' to Arden Hall help bring learning alive.

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The school is an extremely caring community in which pupils' welfare is given a high priority. The individual needs of every pupil are very well understood, and excellent support is given to the potentially vulnerable. There are excellent, well established arrangements to induct pupils into school and to ensure a smooth transition as they move on to the secondary phase of their education.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Almost all of the parents and pupils surveyed felt that the headteacher and senior staff are doing a good job. This reflects their appreciation that this is a fully inclusive school in which discrimination has no place and which gives them a sense of belonging. The direction provided in embedding ambition and driving improvement stems from the good partnerships between the headteacher, his senior staff, and the governing body. The governing body is well led and organised. Governors are well informed and provide robust challenge to the school, particularly through their scrutiny board. Middle level leaders are yet to become fully independent in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility.

An overwhelming majority of the parents who returned the inspection questionnaires felt that the school is good at ensuring their children are safe. Inspectors agree. The pupils' safety and well-being have the highest priority, and all of the required checks on adults who have contact with children are securely in place.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. The school knows its own community very well and has developed links with other schools, both locally and overseas which help promote better understanding of the diverse and multicultural nature of British society.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The rate of response to the inspection questionnaire was much lower than usual for a school of this size. A very large majority of parents and carers recorded positive views in almost all of the areas surveyed. The only aspect of the school's performance that resulted in significant concern relates to the management of unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence shows that the behaviour of pupils is well managed and that there are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Where these do occur, they generally involve the small number of pupils with clearly identified emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castle Bromwich 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 473 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	68	15	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	51	22	47	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	55	20	43	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	49	20	43	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	60	18	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	49	21	45	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	53	22	47	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)	24	51	16	34	4	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	53	20	43	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	36	19	40	9	19	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	34	29	62	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	49	22	47	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	60	18	38	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



1 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Bromwich Junior School, Birmingham, B36 0HD

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. Your parents think that you go to a good school, and we agree.

Here is a list of some of the things that your school does best.

You learn well in lessons and make good progress because you are taught well.

Your small group lessons are particularly useful for those of you who need some extra help.

You develop your personal skills well. This is important in helping you to become good citizens in the future.

You enjoy and learn a lot from the interesting and exciting activities your teachers plan for you.

All of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after.

The people who run your school are doing a good job.

Every school has something that could be improved and we have asked your school to concentrate on a couple of things to help you to do even better. We would like your teachers to make sure that you always act on the comments that they make when they mark your work. We also want them to make sure that they always look for opportunities to improve your skills in literacy, even when you are doing work in other subjects. We also want your teachers to use ICT a lot more in lessons. I'm sure that you will enjoy this! Some of your teachers who are in charge of year groups or subjects are fairly new, and so we want them to find out a bit more about the best ways of checking on how well you are getting on.

I would like you to play your part in helping the school to become even better. The best way for you to do this is to pay careful attention to what your teachers ask you to do and to make sure that you always do your corrections!

I wish you great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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