

Brushwood Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique reference number | 110523 |
| Local authority | Buckinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 378116 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 March 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Derek Aitken |

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

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 211 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ian Scoones |
| Headteacher | Ray Plimsaul |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 May 2007 |
| School address | Brushwood Road Chesham HP5 3DW |
| Telephone number | 01494 786023 |
| Fax number | 01494 793144 |
| Email address | office@brushwood-jun.bucks.sch.uk |

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Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Aitken

Additional inspector

Sharona Semlali

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. During the inspection, two year groups were out of school for varying periods of time on short, local educational visits in connection with a theme week of activities relating to religious education. Inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in English and in other subjects. Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils in Year 6 reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 156 parents and carers, 99 pupils and 34 staff.

Information about the school

Brushwood Junior is a little smaller than most primary schools, but the school roll has increased substantially this year. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but a quarter of pupils come from minority ethnic heritage, of which the largest grouping is Pakistani. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average, but the number of pupils with statements for varying types of special educational needs is much higher than is usually the case.

The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school holds the Healthy Schools, Artsmark Silver and Unicef's Rights Respecting (level 2) 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 | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 1 |

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Its overall effectiveness has improved since it was previously inspected. The high esteem in which it is held by parents and carers is entirely justified as all aspects of its work are excellent.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well throughout their time in this school. Staff make excellent use of their detailed knowledge of the personal and academic characteristics of each pupil to ensure that all pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those at risk of falling behind, realise their potential. An outstanding curriculum which is precisely tailored to individual needs ensures that pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Creative approaches and resources spark pupils’ enthusiasm and engage them fully. Pupils’ personal targets are woven skilfully into lessons to provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on and improve their work. Very occasionally, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to share and review what they have learned or do not provide quite enough support to help pupils to tackle their challenging tasks.
- Pupils’ behaviour and safety are outstanding. They are extremely well motivated, and display high levels of tolerance and respect towards each other and the staff. Pupils, and their parents and carers, believe that they are very well cared for and that the school is an exceptionally safe place.
- Leaders and managers have high aspirations for pupils’ academic progress and well-being, and successfully meet their goals. Teaching has improved as a result of highly purposeful professional development and careful monitoring. Key members of the governing body have a good overview of the school and contribute usefully to its strategic direction. Procedures to enable all governors to acquire detailed first-hand knowledge of the school’s work are not fully developed.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that existing excellent practice in the following two areas is promoted across all classes:
 - sharing and discussing the learning of all groups of pupils regularly to enable them to all benefit from a wide range of ideas for improving their work
 - achieving an appropriate balance between promoting pupils' independent learning and providing them with the small steps of support they need to work through their challenging tasks securely.
- Enhance the capacity of all members of the governing body to contribute to school development by providing a wider range of opportunities for them to acquire a first-hand understanding of the quality of provision.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is broadly average. They make excellent progress over Key Stage 2 so that, by the end of Year 6, attainment is significantly above average. Pupils' attainment has improved since the previous inspection and there are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs also make exceptional progress. The few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also attain more highly than their national peers. Pakistani pupils attain slightly less well than their White British counterparts at the higher level but make equally strong progress from their starting points which are frequently lower on entry to Year 3.

Pupils' attainment in reading is significantly above average by the end of Year 6. They enjoy practising their reading skills; most read regularly from a wide range of texts at home and record conscientiously details and written responses to their reading in their logs or journals. Pupils' mathematical and writing skills are similarly significantly above average by the time they leave. They achieve especially well in mathematics where they are particularly adept at solving difficult problems.

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, including those whose children have recently transferred to the school, are highly satisfied with their children's achievement. Over time, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills demonstrate significant improvement. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make rapid progress. For example, in an excellent Year 5 lesson, these pupils planned and created their own sensory garden through the medium of music and art, using expressive vocabulary to explain the growth cycles of fruits and vegetables.

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Quality of teaching

With very few exceptions, parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire stated that pupils were taught well. Inspection findings show that teaching is outstanding. In all lessons, teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and progress foster very secure relationships and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. The curriculum provides an outstanding framework for teachers' planning and is equally well developed for literacy and numeracy. Staff plan regular theme weeks, not only to add interest to pupils' learning but also to extend the curriculum and tackle perceived gaps in pupils' achievement. These unannounced weeks provide pupils with exciting opportunities to boost their self-confidence, work collaboratively and apply their skills in new contexts. Pupils make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT), independent research and homework to improve their writing skills, for example through the incorporation of ambitious connectives and descriptive vocabulary.

Teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure pupils learn systematically and at a fast pace. Work is closely matched to meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Staff are particularly adept in promoting pupils' speaking skills and in monitoring pupils' progress to identify weaknesses which are then addressed by a flexible programme of individual or small group interventions. These include short, rapid reading sessions and paired-talk lessons which accelerate the acquisition of language for lower-attaining pupils and those pupils at an early stage of learning English. Similarly, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from intensive practice, for example in high-frequency words, developing their capacity to work unaided. Teaching assistants support these groups exceptionally well, enabling them to take great strides in improving the quality of their work.

Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, dynamic teaching and highly effective use of assessment propel pupils' learning forward. Pupils respond well to challenging, investigative tasks and opportunities to demonstrate their speaking and problem-solving skills. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils used logical and systematic approaches to work through various mathematical puzzles and explained their reasoning for the selection of prime and squared numbers.

On a very few occasions, teachers overestimate what pupils can achieve independently and omit to provide them with the small steps of guidance or resources needed to secure their learning. Teachers check pupils' progress through skilful use of questions, but do not always provide enough opportunities for all pupils to learn from each other and clarify their ideas, for example to enhance their writing skills. Teachers provide pupils with detailed, helpful marking closely linked to their personal targets.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' resilience and responsiveness are important factors in their great enjoyment of school. They report that anyone can see how happy they are to be in school by the friendly way in which pupils play together. Parents and carers are rightly unanimous in their views that their children are extremely safe and very well looked after in school. Pupils agree with these opinions and have a clear sense that the school is an exceptionally cohesive community. They contribute to the school very effectively in a wide range of useful roles. They benefit from excellent opportunities to explore and reflect on the concept of community at local, national and global levels, and to consider and express informed views on the human rights of individuals and groups. They feel valued as relationships are excellent and there is a tangible climate of mutual respect. Pupils are proud to receive various forms of recognition for their efforts and achievements. They display exemplary attitudes towards each other and their learning. They concentrate fully, persevere and exhibit a determination to succeed. They are extremely keen to support each other to learn well, for example in lessons where individual pupils adopt group leadership roles.

Pupils develop a strong moral code which is aligned with the school's values and rules. They behave exceptionally well in lessons, assemblies and in the playground. They understand the school's expectations and respond promptly to guidance, as reflected in the absence of any forms of exclusion in the school records. These records also demonstrate that any untoward incidents, including those with a homophobic or racial behaviour perspective, are extremely rare and that high standards of behaviour have been maintained over time. Pupils report that any form of bullying is virtually unknown in school and that the very infrequent incidences of horseplay are tackled swiftly by staff. Pupils acquire an excellent understanding of situations that might endanger their personal safety. Even the younger pupils confidently apply their 'five finger friends' (sources of help in times of need) to situations where they might feel troubled. Pupils' sense of well-being in school is reflected in their consistently above-average attendance.

Leadership and management

Outstanding leadership has resulted in significant improvements to outcomes for pupils since the previous inspection. Rigorous standards for staff performance are met well. Staff have strong expectations and morale is high. There is a clear momentum for continuous improvement to realise a vision where only the best will do. Procedures, for example for the monitoring of teaching and learning, are closely aligned to whole-school priorities and the needs of individual staff. Curriculum leadership is excellent, reflected in the exceptionally broad and balanced curriculum. Highly qualified staff have made expert use of self-study, research opportunities to coach new staff and to implement and monitor far-reaching improvements to the curriculum, for example in ICT. This has enabled pupils to acquire a greater range of technological skills and helped them reinforce and extend their skills in other subjects. Results of monitoring are fed into a clear school development plan and key priorities are tackled with determination. Detailed tracking is used exceptionally well

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to adapt the curriculum to meet individual needs and to allocate resources accordingly.

Leaders are clearly focused on tackling discrimination and minimising gaps between groups of learners, and monitor interventions stringently to ensure their efforts are successful. Staff leave no stone unturned to further pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in keeping with the school's prestigious Unicef award. The school promotes equal opportunities exceptionally well, as reflected in the highly positive outcomes for all groups of pupils. Members of the governing body are similarly ambitious and influential in determining overall strategy. However, some procedures to enable individual governors to develop their evaluative roles are not embedded in the school's work. Leaders and governors ensure safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The school is energetic in sharing its expertise with other schools and in developing partnerships, including with local infant schools, which smooth the integration of new pupils, both socially and academically. Its capacity for sustained development is outstanding.

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.



21 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brushwood Junior School, Chesham HP5 3DW

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently, and for sharing your views with us, including through the questionnaires you completed. Yours is an outstanding school.

- You are exceptionally well cared for by the staff. You respond superbly by behaving excellently. Your attitudes to learning, tolerance for each other and relationships with the staff are excellent.
- You are taught exceptionally well and this helps you take big strides in your learning. By the end of Year 6, your attainment is above average and you have made excellent progress in English, mathematics and many other subjects. This is because the staff make every effort to provide you with challenging, imaginative activities to develop your skills.
- The staff are exceptionally well led by the senior leaders. They set themselves high standards and work very hard to ensure no pupil is left behind in their learning. They are consistently seeking new ways to make your learning as interesting and effective as possible, and to improve your experiences in school.

We have asked the staff and members of the governing body to do three things to help you learn even better.

- Make sure you all have good opportunities to review your learning as a class, not just as a group or with your partner, to give you more ideas about how to improve your work.
- Strike the best possible balance between allowing you to work independently while not forgetting to give you support when you need it.
- Make sure governors gain more first-hand knowledge of the school to help them in their work.

All of you can help by continuing to work really hard and by maintaining your above-average attendance.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken
Lead inspector

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