

Branston Junior Academy

Station Road, Branston, Lincoln, LN4 1LH

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. They make good progress, with the best progress being made between Year 4 and Year 6.
- Pupils do particularly well in English and this is reflected in rising results in national tests at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching in all classes is good and some teaching is outstanding.
- Behaviour in lessons is always good. Pupils are confident, polite and courteous. They enjoy their lessons and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leadership and management are good, and leaders have brought about improvements to teaching and the progress that pupils make.
- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have high expectations and set high standards. They are well supported by a staff team that understands what they want to achieve and shares in their determination to succeed.
- Exciting topics provide learning opportunities that engage and motivate pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment and progress in Year 3 is not as good as in other year groups.
- Not all lessons motivate pupils so that they are encouraged to do their best.
- Some lessons do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work on their own and find things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 parts of lessons. Three were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, other leaders and managers, pupils and the school's external adviser.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Account was taken of the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for future improvement. The inspectors also looked at documents and policies concerning school management, including minutes of governing body meetings and information on keeping pupils safe.
- Consideration was given to the 30 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. The results of the school's own recent survey of parents' views were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Sue Rath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sherry Gladwin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized junior school. It converted to become an academy school in July 2012. When its predecessor school, Branston Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- There are six classes: three classes with mixed Year 3 and 4 pupils and three mixed Year 5 and 6 classes.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. There are a small number of children from service families. Both of these groups of pupils are entitled to additional government funding called the pupil premium.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The percentage who have a statement of special educational needs, or who are supported at school action plus, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - extending opportunities for teachers to plan lessons jointly across classes so that all teachers can benefit from the very best practice
 - ensuring that more lessons provide opportunities for pupils to learn through exciting and engaging activities
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to find things out for themselves and to work independently.
- Improve the progress that pupils make in Year 3 by:
 - making sure that the activities teachers plan match precisely the next steps in learning for the youngest pupils in the school
 - developing a programme of learning that is appropriate for pupils when they move to the school in Year 3.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are above those expected nationally in English and mathematics. However, some pupils lack secure skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected levels in both English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average, and pupils do particularly well at the higher levels. Over time, results have been mostly above average and in English they have risen over the last three years. Based on the school's own checks, and writing assessment verified by the local authority, standards should rise again at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013.
- Pupils' work and school information shows that pupils are doing well and that they make good progress in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils make slower progress when they first join the school in Year 3 because work is not tailored to meet their individual needs and support them to quickly gain confidence in their new school.
- Most pupils read very well and have frequent opportunities to read within school. Standards in reading are above average throughout the school. Those pupils who find reading hard are provided with help to learn the sounds that letters make, but they do not always know how to use these when they read an unfamiliar word.
- Pupils write well in all subjects and some good examples of writing were seen in pupils' books. Excellent progress was observed in a lesson, planned collaboratively across Years 5 and 6, where pupils were writing newspaper reports and using grammar well to create emotion in their writing.
- Teachers and their assistants work very effectively together to provide tailored support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, they make the same good progress as other pupils.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make good progress and a high proportion make the progress expected of all pupils. In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals made better progress than their classmates in both English and mathematics. Nevertheless, not as many reached the higher levels overall in English and mathematics: in English, they were two terms behind their classmates and in mathematics they are four terms behind.
- Children of service families do better than other pupils in the school, and their attainment is well above that expected nationally. The school provides well tailored care and guidance for these pupils, whose families may be experiencing difficulties.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably in recent years. The school's records, and the lessons observed during the inspection, show that it is now consistently at least good and sometimes outstanding.
- Teachers make sure that work meets the needs of all groups of pupils. They make accurate use

of checks on pupils' work to provide challenge, and extra activities for those who learn quickly, and suitable activities for those who learn slowly.

- During lessons, teachers use demanding questions to deepen pupils thinking. This is effective in extending pupils' knowledge and understanding and allows them to demonstrate what they have learnt.
- Teachers' marking is good and provides pupils with accurate information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers give pupils opportunities to follow their advice and respond to the comments in their marking. This enables teachers to deal quickly with any misconceptions.
- Most teachers plan tasks that truly interest pupils. When this happens, pupils find learning fun and they are motivated to do their very best. Some teachers plan learning together and when this is the case, their classes benefit from well-planned lessons where staff have shared ideas and expertise. On occasion, lessons do not capture pupils' imagination and this slows the pace of learning.
- Some teachers organise learning activities so that pupils have to work together on tasks. This encourages pupils to become independent learners, think for themselves and promotes their social and moral development well. In an outstanding Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, pupils worked very effectively together to discover which nets could form a cube. They discussed their ideas using mathematical vocabulary to justify their answers. However, there are times when the work that pupils are expected to do in lessons does not enable them to develop these skills.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning. Along with teachers, they keep a careful eye on pupils' progress during lessons and modify their support in the light of what they have seen. The very good relationships in the school create a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff.
- Support for any pupil who shows signs of falling behind is very effective. These pupils, and those who are eligible for the pupil premium, often benefit from being taught individually or in small groups by well-trained teaching assistants.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They are welcoming, friendly, polite and keen to help.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and demonstrate high levels of concentration and enthusiasm, particularly when work is challenging. Where work is less demanding, pupils' levels of concentration decline and, although behaviour remains good, it is not at the same high level.
- Good work is frequently celebrated by pupils who listen with attention to each other's ideas. They show empathy for others and there is no discrimination evident in their relationships.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that, although there is some bullying, it is always dealt with quickly and effectively. They know how to stay safe in situations beyond the school, including when using the internet. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.

- Pupils take on additional responsibilities and carry them out well. For example, some pupils run class assemblies and have the opportunity to manage the school for a day, taking over the headteacher's office, managing a meeting with the Chair of the Governing Body and talking to parents. This gives pupils an insight into the day-to-day running of the school. They take an active role in out-of-school activities and are well prepared for their move to secondary education.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils are clearly well motivated to attend and come to school on time every day.

The leadership and management are good

- The well-focused and effective leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leaders, has moved the school forward successfully over recent years. Teaching and pupils' learning have improved, with the result that standards of attainment have risen and continue to rise.
- Senior leaders, together with governors, are ambitious for the school. Their focus is on working towards academic excellence while developing wider opportunities and experiences for pupils.
- Leaders check teaching carefully and provide staff with a good range of professional training which is well matched to their individual needs. Leaders set them challenging targets about pupils' attainment and progress as part of the management of their performance, and teachers consistently meet their targets.
- Leaders check pupils' attainment and progress regularly. They analyse the results rigorously so that any underachievement is recognised quickly. They make use of additional support groups, which enable pupils to make progress in their learning.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and linked to the cycle of improvement planning. A well-structured plan steers the work of the school and enables leaders to measure success.
- Other leaders have a good understanding of their subjects or areas of responsibility, and make a good contribution to school improvement. For example, the effective leadership and management of the mathematics leader has helped teachers to improve the quality of their mathematics teaching.
- The school organises the subjects it teaches effectively, making sure subjects link together well and maintain pupils' interest. Themed days, related to the topic pupils are covering, maintain pupils' enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. Pupils spoke with excitement about the day that a hot air balloon arrived at school along with a truck as part of their 'around the world in 80 days' theme. Links to other counties which enable pupils to find out about the lives of others, along with assemblies and religious education lessons, contribute effectively to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Although the school is a free standing academy, it has employed an adviser who provides an external view of the school's performance and effectiveness and supports with professional training. This has enabled governors and leaders to develop in their roles and improved the quality of teaching.

■ The governance of the school:

- As a result of careful monitoring, governors know the school well and are clear about its strengths and what could be improved. They use information on the school's performance to compare it with schools nationally. Governors visit the school regularly to check on the quality of its work and what progress has been made.
- They bring a breadth of expertise and experience to their roles, and are able to challenge school leaders on a variety of issues. They access a range of training to ensure that they keep up to date.
- Governors have recently changed the format used for the headteacher's performance management following advice from their external adviser. They seek information about the outcomes of teachers' performance management discussions and support the headteacher's planned actions to improve the quality of teaching. They are well informed about the link between pay and teachers' performance.
- The relevant committee keeps a close check on the school's financial position and ensures that money is used effectively for the benefit of pupils. Governors make sure that the school uses the additional pupil premium funding wisely and monitor the effect it has on raising achievement.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and takes safeguarding seriously ensuring that requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138486
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	409381

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

Type of school	Junior
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Plant
Headteacher	Rachael Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
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