

Brington Primary School

Little Brington, Northampton, NN7 4HX

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Children get off to a successful start in Reception and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Most pupils currently are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make sure that most of the tasks they set are matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Pupils' good behaviour helps them learn effectively. They take pride in their work and are keen to show what they have learned.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Pupils feel safe and are very caring of each other. They are well looked after by staff.
- The curriculum activities and subjects provided interest the pupils. The strong focus on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a significant impact.
- The headteacher and committed team of staff have created a friendly and happy school where teaching is good, and pupils work hard and achieve well, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching do not always challenge all pupils to extend their thinking skills, especially in mathematics.
- Marking varies in quality; as a result, some pupils make slower progress than others because they do not receive good guidance on how to improve.
- The subject leaders are at the early stages of developing their roles to drive improvements in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. He joined the two assemblies in the school.
- Samples of pupils' work and teachers' marking were examined.
- The inspector took account of the 32 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View); several letters from parents; the nine staff questionnaire responses and spoke to some parents as they brought children to school.
- Senior staff and teachers were interviewed.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils, both formally and informally.
- Pupils from Year 2, 3 and 6 were heard reading.
- A meeting took place with the Chair of the Governing Body and her colleague, who manage the federation of the two schools.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, data on the progress of pupils, safeguarding policies and procedures, and records of exclusions, incidents of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has two classes.
- The vast majority of the pupils come from White British backgrounds with very few from minority ethnic groups. Nearly all pupils speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. This is extra government funding for particular groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is well below the national average. There is one pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There has been a significant change to staffing in the last year.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2010, as headteacher of two schools. The federation of the Althorp Partnership of Primary schools was formed with Harlestone Primary in November 2011, and she was appointed executive headteacher.
- The school manages its own breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, so that all pupils make more rapid progress, by:
 - setting demanding but achievable tasks and activities that challenge all pupils at the right level
 - consistently using marking throughout the school to give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work
 - involving subject leaders more in monitoring and evaluating learning in lessons across the federation.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in mathematics so that achievement as high in mathematics is as it is in writing by providing training and support for teachers to bolster their confidence in teaching mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils make good progress from their various starting points and some make outstanding progress. Their eagerness to learn undoubtedly makes a strong contribution to this.
- Attainment varies because the very small year groups are comprised of pupils with significantly different starting points. In recent years, pupils arrive in the school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age, but lower than usual in some areas of language and understanding the world.
- The current cohort of Reception children started school with skills that were well below those typical for their age, especially in personal, social and emotional development, language, reading and writing. However, they are making good progress as a result of good teaching and are on track to reach above-average standards by the end of the Reception Year. The children benefit from working alongside their older classmates, who provide caring support and set a good example in modelling the right behaviour that helps pupils learn.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1. Well-structured teaching of phonics (the sounds letters represent in words), and regular reading at school and at home, sustain the effective step-by-step development of pupils' literacy skills throughout the school. By the time pupils take the Year 2 national tests, they have caught up with the standard most children achieve nationally.
- The picture of progress has been inconsistent due to previous data at Key Stage 1 being inaccurate and overestimating some pupils' attainment. This issue was identified by the current headteacher, and her analysis was checked and agreed by the local authority. This issue meant that results at Key Stage 2 have often underestimated pupils' progress. Despite this, other evidence shows that progress has accelerated recently at all levels.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have generally been average or above. In 2013, all of the Year 6 pupils made at least the two levels of progress expected during the key stage in writing, and all but one did so in mathematics. In reading, the picture was much weaker, although the very small numbers in this cohort mean that just a couple of pupils can have a large impact on the figures. Half the group exceeded the expected progress in writing, but none did so in reading or mathematics. The school carried out a thorough analysis of the results alongside teacher assessments and evidence of work and are confident that individual extenuating circumstances during the testing week are the reasons for the lower than expected progress.
- Attainment of pupils on entry to Key Stage 1 is currently slightly above average. The evidence from pupils' work shows that pupils are making accelerated progress in Years 4, 5 and 6; attainment in Year 6 is above average and pupils are making more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current data shows that reading and mathematics are on an improving trend due to the very effective support that children have been given and the good-quality training that staff have received. School tracking data show that the good progress has accelerated across Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is confirmed by the quality of pupils' work in books.
- There were no pupils in Year 6 eligible for support from the pupil premium in 2013. Across the school as a whole, these pupils make the same good progress as their classmates. Pupil premium money has been used to support eligible pupils, including through the purchase of extra tablet computers which are regularly used in lessons, new and interesting reading books,

as well as one-to-one support for individuals and small groups of pupils.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because any particular requirements, to enable them to learn as well as others, are identified at an early stage and they are quickly provided with the right challenge, help and support.
- The more-able pupils are making good progress. In Years 5 and 6, there is evidence of more-able pupils producing work at the higher levels. More-able pupils are, this year, carrying out work at Level 6 in both English and mathematics.
- Reading shows the most significant improvement. Pupils read fluently. They have good skills in using phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to read any unfamiliar words. Older pupils talk confidently about their favourite authors and show obvious enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed systematically. They have many opportunities to write for extended periods and lots of interesting experiences to draw on, as was seen in Key Stage 2 when pupils were creating reference books as part of their topic work on Ancient Egypt.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics has not been as strong as in writing and reading because teachers are not as confident in relating the skills they are teaching to real-life mathematical problem solving.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books show that teaching has been typically good over the last year, despite the staffing changes which the school has faced.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop good relationships with pupil that gives them the confidence to learn. This contributes to pupils' consistently good attitudes to their work.
- The activities captivate pupils' attention, especially in their topic work. Pupils show great delight in being asked to work with each other and rise to their teachers' high expectations.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning in the mixed-age classes. They regularly lead sessions with small groups within each class. This enables pupils of all abilities to have individual help to make good progress. In a Key Stage 1 phonics session, the teacher worked with the Reception pupils revising their knowledge of letter sounds while the teaching assistant worked with the Year 1 pupils. The same teaching assistant watched over a group of Year 2 pupils who had been given independent tasks. This enabled all pupils to make good progress because they all benefited from work just right for their abilities. This good-quality teaching of reading skills to younger children lays the foundations for developing fluent reading across the school.
- Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the teaching assistants, who show great patience and skill with these pupils, so that they are able to participate fully in their lessons.
- The classrooms are well set out with pupils' work on display, challenges to stretch thinking and plenty of support for learning.
- Homework provides good support for the work in class through 'challenge tasks'. Work in pupils'

'Take Home' books deepens and extends their learning. Homework receives an enthusiastic response from the pupils. Pupils take pride in their work and presentation is generally of a high standard.

- The small class sizes mean that all staff know individuals very well. They generally use this knowledge to make sure that all individual pupils, including the most able, are given activities and challenges that are just at the right level to enable them to learn well and make good progress. There are occasions, however, when the work set, including for the more able, does not fully reflect pupils' different ages and abilities.
- Where teachers' marking of pupils' work is most effective, it helps pupils to learn and to improve their work, but this is not a consistent feature of marking in all subjects across the school.
- The quality of mathematics teaching is not as consistently good as that of reading and writing. Teachers are not as confident and do not always provide opportunities for pupils to work out problems that they might encounter in real life or to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is seen typically in lessons and around the school. Pupils' enthusiasm and eagerness to learn are resulting in the good progress seen in lessons and in pupils' books. They are eager to learn and strive to produce their best work.
- Good behaviour management by teachers and good relationships support positive learning behaviours. Pupils check each other's work thoughtfully.
- Pupils have a good understanding of why they should behave and how it affects their work. As a result, pupils talk positively about their work and the teachers.
- Very occasionally, when not sure of what is expected of them or how much time they have to work on a task, or if they are set a task that is either too complicated or too easy, their concentration lapses.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school undertook a safeguarding audit in January which confirmed a picture of a very safe school.
- Pupils are very complimentary about personal safety. They say they feel safe in school. The parents' questionnaire in the summer endorses this and most of the parents who responded to Parent View also agreed. The school provides a nurturing environment and all pupils are very well cared for. Pupils' understanding of how to avoid risks benefits from the school's work with outside agencies, such as the police, coming in to speak to them.
- Pupils develop good social skills. One benefit of the mixed-age classes is that younger pupils learn from the older ones. Older pupils help to look after younger pupils in class and around the school and all are kind and respectful to each other. Pupils take a pride in all aspects of the school environment and help to look after this.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including name-calling, physical and cyber-bullying. They say that any form of bullying is extremely rare, but 'There isn't any bullying now.' School records confirm this. Pupils are confident that if bullying did occur, it would be dealt

with swiftly.

- The school has maintained above average attendance, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has become the executive headteacher of the federated schools and has led the school well. She has high aspirations for the pupils and has made a significant impact on the school's performance. Improved teaching has resulted in pupils' more-rapid progress and a more interesting way of organising subjects and learning activities. The headteacher is driving improvements effectively and has engendered good teamwork among staff, governors and parents.
- Despite the changes in staff since the previous inspection and, more especially, since September 2013, the school has set ambitious targets for this year and senior leaders are diligent in checking that all pupils are now making good progress and achieving more as a result.
- Links with the federated school are good. Joint staff meetings and professional development are helping the staff to learn from one another's practice in the two schools. The staff have responsibility across the federation, such as subject leadership, to help their professional and career development. One such improvement has been the exchange of ideas to improve the teaching of reading.
- The school has identified that teachers would benefit from additional support in teaching mathematics, and the mathematics subject leader is already driving improvement in this area, using expertise from within the federation.
- A new team of subject leaders, with clear roles and responsibilities, has had to become established and trained in the school, utilising expertise across the federation. These members of staff know their areas of responsibility well and model good practice effectively in planning. However, subject leaders are not checking closely enough that teachers' planning includes activities set at the right level for pupils, or that marking is of consistently high quality at all times.
- The school improvement plan is based clearly on accurate and robust data. It focuses on ensuring that the basic skills of reading and mathematics are taught effectively. Challenging the most-able pupils, particularly in mathematics, is a high priority and the action subject leaders have taken to increase the focus on the teaching of mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2, has already had significant impact on raising achievement.
- The headteacher monitors teachers' performance very effectively and identifies where improvements need to be made. Robust procedures that are linked to salary progression are implemented to improve teachers' performance. Where teaching requires improvement, leaders provide appropriate individual support. Partnerships with other schools are proving beneficial in ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements are now totally reliable and that teachers use this information to help pupils achieve as much as they can.
- The curriculum links subjects through topics that engage pupils' interest. Pupils have many opportunities to write at length in subjects other than in literacy. However, they do not have enough chance to engage in investigations in mathematics, so that they can improve their skills. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy many opportunities to explore the world

around them and develop their skills and knowledge, as seen with their stick insects as part of their project on the 'bug world'.

- Many enrichment activities extend pupils' learning beyond school and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils talked enthusiastically about their Second World War topic and using computers to find information for homework.
- Primary sports funding has been used to bring in specialist sports coaches who work alongside teachers to increase their skills in delivering physical education and encourage pupils' healthy lifestyles. The school also uses the funding to ensure that the pupils are able to attend more small-school sports events and give them the opportunity to participate in competitions related to the school size. This has resulted in more pupils taking up sports, including tag rugby.
- The school is strongly committed to ensuring equal opportunity for all pupils. The impact of pupil premium funding is carefully monitored. It has been used effectively, so that eligible pupils are making good and, sometimes, outstanding progress.
- The school involves parents through regular newsletters which keep them informed of all that is happening at school. It also encourages them to support their children's learning by, for example, listening to them read at home, the Take Home books for completing homework and ensuring that their children attend regularly.
- The local authority's involvement with this school has been appropriate to its needs. It provided the school with links to another federation, which has been very supportive over recent staffing changes. It keeps a monitoring brief on the school and has continued to provide support where needed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective and its members are knowledgeable. Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and what needs to happen to improve it still further. They regularly review data about pupils' progress and rigorously hold the school to account. They hold the headteacher to account for ensuring that staff salaries and teachers' performance are closely linked. Governors help to formulate plans for school improvement and set robust targets for the headteacher's performance. They attend the school, not just for meetings, but also to see what is going on in the classrooms, to be there for parents on parents' evenings and at a range of school events.
 - Governors make sure that the school finances are well managed. They make regular checks on the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium to ensure that the money is used effectively. They also check that the new sport funding develops skills and enhances pupils' health, well-being and interest in sport. They ensure that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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	121798
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	443923

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Billingsby
Headteacher	Jan Abrams
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2010
Telephone number	01604 770286
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