

Braintcroft Primary School

Warren Road, London NW2 7LL

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- A culture of low expectations and poor standards permeates all aspects of school life.
- Leaders and governors have been slow to identify and address weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders do not routinely follow up concerns about pupils' welfare. Referrals to external agencies are not made in a timely manner. Consequently, pupils at risk of harm do not receive the necessary help to safeguard their welfare.
- Inaccurate record-keeping hinders leaders' work to promote pupils' safety. Leaders are often unaware of concerns or whether they have been followed up appropriately.
- Across the school, pupils underachieve significantly, particularly in reading, which was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection.
- Too few pupils make the good progress needed to achieve to the best of their abilities in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching fails to meet pupils' needs. Often, lower- and middle-ability pupils struggle with work that is too hard. Teachers typically set the most able pupils tasks that are too easy.
- Leaders and teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' outcomes. Pupils' untidy or poor-quality work is regularly left unchallenged by teachers.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, fall behind in their learning. Leaders and governors have failed to make effective use of the pupil premium funding to help eligible pupils catch up and achieve as well as their peers nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not routinely receive well-targeted support to help them learn effectively.
- Staff do not provide pupils with clear guidance on how to behave sensibly or play safely in the playground.
- In the early years, poor teaching and low expectations mean children are inadequately prepared for their learning in Year 1.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching in Spanish, music and physical education is of better quality. As a result, pupils try hard and enjoy their learning.
- Leaders and staff work effectively with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take urgent action to safeguard pupils' welfare by ensuring that:
 - leaders establish a culture where pupils' safety and well-being are paramount
 - leaders check that staff are aware of all potential risks to pupils' safety, including indicators that a pupil may be vulnerable to developing extreme views
 - clear procedures are in place for staff to raise concerns and that staff understand and follow these procedures correctly
 - leaders follow up child protection concerns rigorously, drawing on advice from external agencies where appropriate, so that vulnerable pupils receive help promptly
 - record-keeping is accurate, of high quality and meets statutory requirements
 - pupils are appropriately supervised in the playground
 - staff provide pupils with clear guidance to help them play sensibly and safely
 - leaders systematically review safeguarding arrangements to ensure that they are effective.
- Improve leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - leaders have consistently high expectations of each other, staff and pupils
 - leaders use information about how well pupils learn and achieve to refine their plans to improve teaching quality and pupils' outcomes
 - leaders check the impact of their work rigorously
 - additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent effectively so that these pupils make good progress
 - in the early years, leaders and teachers assess children's knowledge and skills accurately so that teaching is well matched to their needs and additional support can be focused on children who are falling behind.
- Raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers expect the best from pupils in all aspects of their learning and behaviour
 - leaders provide staff with effective guidance to help them improve teaching and strengthen progress for all groups of pupils
 - pupils routinely complete activities that are appropriately demanding

- teaching challenges the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to achieve the standard of which they are capable
 - in reading, teachers provide pupils with well-targeted guidance and support to help them develop age-related phonics and comprehension skills
 - pupils make strong progress in mathematics through frequent opportunities to solve problems and reason mathematically.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
 - An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The quality of education has declined significantly since the last inspection. Leaders and governors have failed to instil a culture of high expectations. As a result, leaders and teachers are too ready to accept low standards in all aspects of school life.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is superficial and overgenerous. This has hampered their efforts to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes. Weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements have not been identified or addressed.
- Although leaders check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning regularly, they do not use this information effectively to prioritise or refine their plans for improvement. Leaders often overwhelm themselves with actions without being clear on what they want to achieve or how they will measure the impact of their work. Consequently, any improvements are slow and not sustained over time.
- Weaknesses in leadership are evident in the breakdown of effective safeguarding arrangements. Leaders give insufficient weight to checking whether procedures are fit for purpose. They assume that staff are vigilant and follow agreed procedures but do not check what happens in practice.
- Disorganised record-keeping and poor communication between staff mean that leaders are often unaware of risks to pupils' well-being, or whether any concerns have been followed up appropriately with parents and carers or external agencies. This represents an unacceptable risk to pupils' welfare.
- The pupil premium funding is spent poorly. Leaders are uncertain whether the strategies they implement help eligible pupils to achieve as well as their peers nationally. Leaders allocate funding to a range of interventions but are unclear how many disadvantaged pupils take part or what the impact has been.
- Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities assess pupils' needs adequately, drawing appropriately on support from external agencies. However, additional funding for these pupils is not spent well. Leaders do not monitor whether these pupils receive the help they need to learn as well as they should.
- Governors have appointed several new leaders with the aim of strengthening leadership capacity. Although they work closely with teachers to help them improve their practice, leaders invest too much time planning actions rather than following up actions that have been agreed. This thwarts leaders' efforts to raise standards and improve teaching.
- Leaders spend the sports premium effectively to improve the quality of physical education teaching and increase pupils' participation in physical activity, including a range of after-school sports clubs.
- The curriculum prepares pupils adequately for life in modern Britain. Pupils spoke confidently about the importance of democracy and how this means that everyone can share their views, even if they do not agree with one another. Pupils have a secure understanding of different faiths and are respectful of the views of others.

- The school's values make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils told inspectors that these values help them to 'decide the best way to behave' and 'become the best people that we can'.
- Specialist teaching in subjects such as physical education, music and Spanish contributes well to the school's broad curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including after-school clubs and trips. Pupils told inspectors that these activities help them to enjoy school.
- The majority of parents and carers who spoke to inspectors are supportive of the school. They appreciate how leaders keep them well informed about school events.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not fulfilled their statutory duties to safeguard pupils or held leaders to account for the quality of education the school provides.
- Leaders do not provide governors with sufficiently detailed information on how well pupils achieve across the school. This has prevented governors from asking leaders challenging questions about whether their actions are improving pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching.
- Equally, governors have been too ready to accept leaders' reasons for disadvantaged pupils' underachievement. They have not checked rigorously whether the pupil premium funding is helping disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers nationally.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The school's safeguarding culture is characterised by complacent attitudes and careless practice which compromise pupils' safety and welfare.
- Poor communication between staff hinders leaders' work to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive timely help and protection, including that which is available from external agencies. Although there are systems in place for staff to raise concerns, leaders have not checked whether these procedures ensure that pupils at risk of harm are identified promptly. Inspectors found examples where staff had logged serious concerns but leaders were unaware that these concerns had been raised. In many cases, leaders were uncertain what action had been taken to secure pupils' welfare.
- Record-keeping does not meet statutory requirements. Records are often incomplete and provide no indication of whether appropriate measures have been taken to support vulnerable pupils. Weaknesses in record-keeping extend to behaviour records, including incidents of bullying and racism. Inspectors found that staff log issues inaccurately. Leaders were unaware of this. Consequently, leaders and staff are unable to build an accurate picture of pupils' needs or what support pupils need to promote their welfare.
- Staff receive regular training on different safeguarding issues. However, leaders do not check whether training has increased staff vigilance to signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Although the majority of staff have had training on their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty, staff are not alert to behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is

vulnerable to developing extreme views. Inspectors found examples where potential concerns had been recorded in the school's behaviour logs rather than raised as a child protection concern. As a result, leaders are unable to take suitable action to support pupils who may be at risk.

- Arrangements for promoting pupils' safety in the playground are inadequate. Too few staff supervise pupils and, consequently, potentially dangerous behaviour is overlooked or unchallenged.
- Leaders carry out all the necessary checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work in the school. However, inspectors found a lack of rigour in record-keeping. Leaders were uncertain whether checks on volunteers and agency staff had been carried out in accordance with the school's policy.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school. The majority of parents believe that their children are safe and well looked after. A small number of parents raised concerns about pupils' welfare. Inspectors found they were right to express concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching and learning over time is poor and shows no sign of improving.
- Leaders and teachers do not have a clear understanding of the standards pupils should achieve in reading and mathematics. Consequently, teaching provides pupils with insufficient opportunities to develop age-related skills and knowledge.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers are not ambitious for pupils. Too often teachers accept untidy or poor-quality work that does not reflect pupils' abilities.
- Teaching fails to take account of what pupils already know or can do well. Middle- and lower-attaining pupils often attempt tasks that are too hard. Teachers do not routinely adapt activities when pupils struggle. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, often complete the same activities as their classmates before they move on to tasks that are matched to their abilities.
- The teaching of reading places insufficient focus on ensuring that pupils develop age-expected reading skills. Although pupils read more demanding texts than in the past, lower- and middle-attaining pupils do not receive well-targeted guidance to help them understand what they read. As a result, pupils' progress is slow.
- The mathematics curriculum gives too little weight to the development of pupils' problem-solving or reasoning skills. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to tackle tasks which stretch their thinking and deepen their knowledge.
- Pupils do not receive clear guidance on how to record their learning in mathematics. They often set out calculations in a haphazard manner and consequently make simple errors. Teachers are slow to spot or address this.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to practise writing in different styles. However, the standard of pupils' writing varies considerably between different pieces of work because teachers do not expect pupils to apply their writing skills consistently. Consequently, any improvements are not sustained over time.
- Across the school, pupils' handwriting skills are poorly developed. This hampers their

efforts to produce writing at age-related standards.

- Additional adults make a variable contribution to how well pupils learn, in part because they lack the necessary subject knowledge to provide pupils with well-targeted support and guidance.
- Teaching is not effective in meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders and teachers rely too heavily on interventions to support these pupils with their learning.
- Specialist teaching in Spanish, music and physical education is more closely matched to pupils' needs and interests. In these subjects, pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Ineffective safeguarding arrangements pose a risk to pupils' well-being and safety.
- In the playground, staff do not provide pupils with clear rules or expectations on how to behave sensibly. Inspectors witnessed potentially unsafe behaviour that was not challenged by staff, in part because too few staff were on duty to adequately oversee all areas of the playground. Leaders have not responded to concerns raised by staff regarding the number of adults on duty in the playground.
- Records show that staff do not follow agreed procedures to deal with unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and racist language. As a result, leaders are often unaware of serious concerns and whether these have been resolved appropriately.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare. However, poor record-keeping means that leaders and teachers are unable to monitor or respond effectively if incidents of bullying do occur.
- Leaders and teachers have not ensured that pupils have high enough aspirations for themselves. Pupils do not take enough pride in their learning, as the often scruffy and poor-quality work in pupils' books shows.
- The curriculum supports pupils to develop a basic awareness of how they can keep themselves safe, for example when crossing the road and using the internet. However, although leaders are aware of local risks to pupils' welfare, including gang involvement, older pupils showed a limited understanding of how they could minimise risks to their well-being.
- Pupils are aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and, in particular, how a balanced diet contributes to this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Weak teaching means that pupils often lose interest in their learning and become

restless. Nevertheless, the majority of pupils respond to instructions from teachers and are not typically disruptive.

- Systems to promote good behaviour are not consistently understood nor followed by staff. Equally, younger pupils are unsure of the procedures in place to help them behave well during lessons or in the playground.
- In 2016, pupils' attendance was broadly in line with that of other schools nationally. Leaders track pupils' attendance carefully and are quick to identify pupils who are not attending school as regularly as they should. Close partnerships with external agencies and families enable leaders to tailor extra support to pupils' individual circumstances.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over time and across all subjects, pupils underachieve considerably.
- Poor teaching hinders the progress of all groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although there are pockets of better progress in some classes, there is too much inconsistency throughout the school.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is particularly weak and has been so for a number of years, despite its being identified as an area for improvement at the time of the school's previous inspection. In the 2016 key stage 2 reading test, the progress of Year 6 pupils was significantly lower than that of other pupils nationally. The most able pupils, including the disadvantaged among them, made particularly poor progress, with very few pupils achieving the highest standards.
- Although pupils say they enjoy reading and read regularly at home, teachers do not routinely check if pupils are reading sufficiently challenging books. This contributes to pupils' limited progress in reading.
- Pupils are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. For the past three years, the proportion of pupils who have achieved age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics has been below that of other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 2.
- Outcomes for current pupils are not improving quickly. School assessment information shows that a significant proportion of pupils across the school are not making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects the variable and often weak progress inspectors saw in pupils' books. As a result, standards continue to be low.
- In the past, pupils' achievement in writing has been relatively stronger at the end of key stage 2. However, the quality of writing in pupils' books shows that the progress of current pupils in Years 5 and 6 is uneven.
- The pupil premium funding is not used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve to the very best of their abilities. For the last three years, too few disadvantaged pupils have achieved the expected standards by the end of key stage 2, particularly in reading. Current disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with their peers. The progress of lower-attaining disadvantaged pupils is particularly low.
- Phonics teaching fails to help pupils develop the skills they need to read and write well. In 2016, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the required standard in the national

check dropped significantly and was well below the national average. Too few pupils who fall behind catch up in their phonics knowledge by the end of Year 2.

- Pupils' achievement in key stage 1 is variable and often weak. In 2014 and 2015, Year 2 pupils achieved standards significantly below other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, pupils continued to underachieve. This was particularly evident for middle-attaining pupils. Too few pupils achieved the high standard in reading, writing and mathematics compared with their peers nationally.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that children get the best start to school. Staff have not established effective routines and clear expectations to support children to learn and play together well.
- Teachers' assessments of children's knowledge, understanding and skills are inaccurate. Consequently, teaching is not closely enough matched to children's needs and interests. Activities and resources fail to motivate children or help them sustain their concentration in different tasks. Although children are not typically disruptive, staff do not provide sufficient guidance to help children focus on their learning.
- Inaccurate assessment information prevents leaders and staff from identifying individuals or groups of children who need extra support so they do not fall behind in their learning. As a result, leaders' efforts to improve teaching and children's outcomes are not focused on the children who need it most.
- Teaching fails to support and challenge children to develop age-related skills and understanding. For the last three years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been below the national average. School information suggests that a significant group of children currently in Reception are not making good progress. As a result, they have considerable ground to make up in order to achieve age-related standards and be well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Disadvantaged children also underachieve. The proportion of disadvantaged children reaching a good level of development has been well below their peers nationally for the last two years. Outcomes for disadvantaged children currently in Reception show limited improvement.
- The school's ineffective safeguarding arrangements impact the well-being and safety of children in the early years classes. However, leaders have ensured that there are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. There are appropriate numbers of staff to supervise children, and staff receive suitable training to ensure that children's welfare and medical needs are met. Staff conduct regular checks of the classrooms and outdoor areas to ensure that they are safe places for children to learn and play.
- Leaders demonstrate an adequate understanding of what needs to be better in the early years. They are beginning to address these weaknesses with greater urgency than in the past. However, it is too soon to judge whether leaders' actions will lead to sustained improvements.
- Staff are beginning to involve families in contributing to assessments of children's skills and knowledge but this work is at an early stage.

School details

Unique reference number	101532
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10031952

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	720
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Hopkins
Headteacher	Nadine Ferguson
Telephone number	020 8452 2413
Website	www.braintcroftprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@braintcroft.brent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Braintcroft Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors conducted meetings with leaders to review the impact of their work to improve teaching and raise standards for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors considered the school's current assessment information and conducted in-depth scrutinies of pupils' work to consider how well pupils learn and achieve over time.
- Inspectors visited classes in every year group. Many of these visits were conducted jointly with leaders. During these visits, inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning and experiences at the school.
- School documentation related to safeguarding and behaviour was scrutinised by inspectors. Inspectors reviewed referrals made to leaders with responsibility for safeguarding as well as those that leaders subsequently referred to external agencies. Records of staff training, risk assessments, behaviour logs and leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school were also considered. Inspectors also met with leaders to review the impact of their work to safeguard pupils' welfare and promote good standards of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held a meeting with members of the governing body. Written records of their work were also evaluated. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to discuss their views on the school. A group of pupils also gave an inspector a tour of the school. No responses were received to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtimes and in the lunch hall.
- A group of pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read to inspectors. Inspectors also heard pupils read during their visits to classrooms, and talked to them about their attitudes to reading.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff to ascertain their views on the school. No responses were received to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents, primarily through informal discussions on the playground before school. Inspectors also considered the four responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View.

Inspection team

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