

Brandhall Primary School

Brennand Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 0SH

Inspection dates

23 to 24 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. She is determined to continually improve outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders at all levels have successfully improved the weaknesses identified at the last inspection.
- Governance is a strength. Governors hold leaders to account for their actions and provide good levels of support.
- Teaching is good. Pupils make good progress and achieve well by the end of key stage 2.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. Their progress is tracked in detail. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make very good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those new to English make good progress. Support is matched to their individual needs. This is an inclusive school.
- Some lower-ability pupils need more support to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in different areas of learning.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They thrive in an environment of high expectations and outstanding personal development and welfare.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe beyond school.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and well-mannered. Pupils respect and value the opinions and views of others. Teachers are highly effective in developing pupils' oracy skills.
- Pupils take pride in their school and in their work. Presentation of pupils' work in their books is exemplary.
- Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books. However, the teaching of phonics is not yet good enough for all groups of learners in key stage 1 and the early years.
- In early years, children get off to a rapid start from low starting points at the age of two. The early years provides a stimulating, caring place for young learners. However, not enough boys are reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years.
- Partnership with parents is strong. Parents value the pastoral support given to pupils and their families.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes in phonics by ensuring that all teaching of phonics is equally good.
- Teachers to develop lower-ability pupils' use of reasoning and investigative skills in all areas of the curriculum.
- Continue to improve outcomes in the early years by:
 - ensuring that a greater proportion of boys achieves a good level of development
 - ensuring that boys practise newly acquired learning independently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for Brandhall. Since the last inspection she has created a culture of high expectation across the leadership team and has developed a group of skilled and well-informed middle leaders.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Since the last inspection, the standards of teaching and learning have risen. Leaders understand the strengths of individual teachers. They celebrate and share best practice. There is a strong culture of team work, mutual respect and support.
- Support for new teachers, who have opportunities to teach alongside experienced staff and learn from them, is highly effective. Coaching for newly qualified teachers ensures that they rapidly develop. Staff feel valued, and their morale is high. They have confidence in the leadership team. Staff are complimentary about how their individual training needs are supported and met.
- Leaders have invested in professional development programmes. For example, through a nationally accredited programme, middle leaders have developed their research skills. They are constantly questioning where further improvements can be made. Each new action is monitored carefully to evaluate the impact on teaching and learning. Leaders deal with any weaknesses in teaching with personalised support programmes.
- Performance management of staff is effective. Staff know and understand what they are working on. In particular, leaders ensure that all new staff follow the 'Brandhall approach' to the teaching of mathematics and English.
- Leadership of special educational needs provides effective support for pupils with SEND. Staff are skilled at identifying the needs of pupils, and leaders work with a range of external agencies to ensure that high-quality support is in place for those with complex needs. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress in all areas of learning.
- Leaders ensure that the effect of additional funding on pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Regular progress meetings with leaders means that, if a pupil is falling behind, support is swiftly put in place. The pupil premium funding is contributing well to improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- The PE and sport premium funding is encouraging higher rates of participation in sports. The school offers a wide range of sports, including curling and fencing. The school also makes very good use of its extensive playing fields and pitches. Pupils participate in competitive sports in school and with local schools.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Engaging topics help to develop and extend pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. This is supporting pupils in their language development as they experience first-hand historical or scientific experiences. The school has developed a 'Brandhall approach' to the teaching of the curriculum, with good opportunities for pupils to read widely and practise their spoken English across all curriculum areas. As a result, pupils are confident speakers and enthusiastic readers.

- Pupils enjoy 'forest school', tending allotments, a gardening club and pizza making in the outdoor oven. Pupils learn to play the guitar in key stage 2. This is part of a high-quality music curriculum with after school clubs, including a choir. There is a strong culture of celebrating the talents of all pupils.
- The school's partnership with parents is very strong. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning at home. Workshops for parents, which share the school's approaches to how and what their children are learning, are well attended. During parental consultations parents place stickers in their children's books to indicate work they are proud of. The majority of parents have very positive views about the school.
- Leaders support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils talk confidently about their knowledge and understanding of British values and how, for example, democracy works in their school. Through the teaching of the school's values in lessons and assemblies and of religious education, pupils show a thoughtful and informed respect for those with different beliefs. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors understand their responsibilities and are extremely effective in their roles. They are highly aspirational for the pupils in the school. Since the last inspection, governors have shown a determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They understand the school's strengths and have a good knowledge of the school improvement plan and how progress will be measured. Governors regularly visit the school in their curriculum and safeguarding roles. They maintain a skills audit and actively recruit governors with the necessary skills to undertake their roles. Governors make good use of their understanding of the school's data to set challenging targets for the headteacher and senior leaders. External advice and training mean governors are well equipped to ask challenging questions of the leadership team.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leads have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities and duties in keeping pupils safe. Staff receive regular training and updates. Record-keeping is detailed and thorough. All staff understand how to report their concerns. Leaders are proactive and follow up referrals to outside agencies with rigour. Pupils' absence is followed up meticulously. The school works closely with parents and the education welfare officer to ensure that pupils are safe.
- The school site is well-maintained and regular safety checks are carried out. Leaders and governors ensure that safer recruitment procedures are followed with care to check that all adults are suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers appreciate the support and

professional development that they receive. They are constantly seeking to improve and develop their practice. Teachers are extremely reflective and they learn from each other. Good practice in teaching is shared across the school.

- Leaders have developed effective whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics: the 'Brandhall approach'. Teachers' planning is effective, and leaders support teachers well to refine their planning. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan for learning. When pupils have misconceptions, teachers swiftly intervene and provide additional support to revisit learning if necessary. In lessons, pupils identify their level of confidence and understanding by quickly showing one of three cards, ranging from green 'I understand and am confident' to red 'I need more help and support'.
- Teachers place a high emphasis on developing pupils' spoken language and their ability to extend their answers. Time is given to allow pupils to talk through their ideas. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson, pupils were encouraged to explain their understanding of the features of the Aztec civilisation. Pupils gave thoughtful explanations when comparing the role of women in Aztec society with that in twenty-first century Britain. Good use was made of timelines in history to discuss other events taking place around the world at the time of the Aztecs. Work in pupils' books shows that in different year groups pupils are able to place historical events in the context of wider international events.
- Pupils' reading skills are fluent. Teachers carefully select quality texts for reading lessons. Pupils enjoy reading to each other. Teachers skilfully enable pupils to explore increasingly complex texts as they move through the school. The school's system of visual, colourful prompts helps pupils learn different reading skills, such as defining a word or summarising the text. Pupils read a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts in different areas of the curriculum. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and often. Pupils have access to a wide range of texts in school and online.
- Teachers extend pupils' spoken language in reading lessons, constantly checking for understanding. Teachers extend pupils' grammar and vocabulary skills effectively by prompting pupils to extend the ideas of others respectfully in classroom discussions.
- In mathematics lessons, teachers use questioning well to extend pupils' knowledge. Pupils use mathematical language with confidence, for example, when discussing images of places such as the Coliseum in Rome. Work in pupils' books shows that most pupils are able to demonstrate strong reasoning and problem-solving skills in their mathematics work.
- For some lower-ability pupils, however, too much time is spent practising the basic skills in mathematics, and they are not moving on to using and applying their knowledge and skills. As a result, their confidence in using reasoning skills in mathematics and across the curriculum is not yet well developed.
- Teachers have high expectations of the presentation of work in pupils' books. Pupils' handwriting is neat and they use their extensive vocabulary to explain their ideas well. Teachers challenge pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary in their extensive cross-curricular writing.
- Grammar is taught well. Work in books shows that pupils are applying their knowledge of grammar well. More recently, higher expectations in spelling are having a positive

impact on the accuracy of pupils' writing.

- The teaching of phonics in the majority of lessons is good. Many pupils use their phonics skills confidently in their writing. In most lessons, pupils are engaged in learning and they enjoy practising the sounds. However, there are still some weaknesses in the teaching of phonics in key stage 1.
- Additional adults are used well in lessons to support pupils with SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers plan carefully to meet their needs, and sensitive support in lessons ensures that all pupils are active learners.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are proud of their school. There is a culture of high expectations from staff that is focused on every pupil in the school community reaching their full potential. Pupils are particularly confident in their well-developed oral skills. This is demonstrated in lessons and in their interactions with their peers and adults. They are thoughtful speakers and listeners.
- The values of the school permeate school life. Pupils demonstrate ambition, respect, compassion and honesty. They have a strong sense of belonging to the Brandhall School community. Teachers help pupils develop a determination to succeed and pupils see challenges as part of their every-day learning process.
- Pupils use the school grounds well to keep themselves fit and healthy. They explore healthy eating through food in history and know what a healthy diet includes. There is a high participation in extra-curricular physical activities.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning in their classes. They take great care in the presentation of their work for which teachers set very high expectations.
- Pupils are very positive about their school and the opportunities they have to learn and lead. They enjoy taking on leadership roles, including the Eco council, school council and dining room tray duties. Pupils are animated when talking about their fundraising and their care for others. The pupil voice is very strong in the school.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the different forms of bullying. Visiting professionals develop their understanding of the misuse of alcohol, radicalisation, internet safety and how to stay safe when out of school. Pupils know who to talk to in school if they are worried about something, and they are confident it will be dealt with. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Effective partnerships with external agencies support the individual needs of pupils and their families.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils in lessons behave well. As they move around the school they are polite and respectful to staff and visitors. At lunchtimes during the inspection, pupils enjoyed working with sports coaches to use equipment. School records show that incidents of poor behaviour are low.
- Pupils take care of their well-maintained school environment. Corridors celebrate achievements, displays show the range of curriculum experiences. The Eco councillors encourage all pupils to keep outdoor areas free from litter.
- Pupils show high levels of enjoyment, and their school attendance is above average. Pastoral staff work with families and pupils to encourage this good attendance. Systems to monitor and track attendance are having a positive effect on the few pupils who are persistently absent. Pupils actively lead improvements in attendance, with 'attendance trailblazers' encouraging good attendance in weekly assemblies. Rewards celebrate good attendance across the school.
- Over the past two years, the number of exclusions has fallen rapidly. School systems to encourage good behaviour, including the reflection room and time to talk to adults, contribute to pupils taking responsibility for their good conduct. Pupils are encouraged to have high self-esteem, to believe in themselves and take pride in all they do.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress is good because the quality of teaching has improved rapidly since the last inspection. Progress is clearly evident in pupils' books. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate because the systems to moderate work among staff and leaders are detailed and effective. Teachers regularly meet with leaders to discuss the progress of individual pupils. Leaders have high expectations and hold teachers to account for pupils' progress.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 for the past three years has been above the national average in writing and mathematics.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 2 achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above the national average. Most notably, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth at the end of key stage 2 rose significantly in 2018. Outcomes for pupils achieving greater depth in key stage 2 in 2018 were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2018 in key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing and mathematics was above the national average. Their progress in reading was in line with the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined in key stage 2 in 2018 was in line with the national average for all pupils.
- The school has a high number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers provide a language rich environment to help these pupils develop their skills in spoken and written English. At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, their progress was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In phonics, outcomes have been static for the past three years, with three quarters of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1. This has

remained just below the national average since the last inspection.

- In key stage 1 in 2018, the proportion of all pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including disadvantaged pupils, rose to be in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils in key stage 1 reaching greater depth in 2018 increased in all subjects and was above the national average for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing.
- In 2018, pupils with SEND made strong progress. At the end of key stage 2, their progress was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books and school assessment information shows that lower-ability pupils are making progress in their factual knowledge and fluency in different subjects. However, their skills of applying their knowledge, or having opportunities to practise their reasoning skills, are not evident across all year groups.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is effective. The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths of early years. Sharply focused action plans are in place to support continued improvements.
- The early years staff work closely together to create a smooth transition from the pre-school into Nursery and Reception. Parents share knowledge of their children with staff and effective partnerships with parents are well established.
- Children make good progress from their low starting points. In 2018, outcomes improved and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is now in line with the national average. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that more boys reach this standard in preparation for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- From when children join at the age of two, there is a great emphasis on their language development. As they move through the early years, the school's focus on developing talk to support writing is evident. Children are taught a good pencil grip, which supports their mark making and subsequent letter formation well.
- The early years environment is vocabulary rich. Adults model spoken English well, and they encourage the children to respond in full sentences. As a result, children gain confidence and chat easily with each other and visitors.
- Classrooms and the outdoor areas are stimulating. The children have free access to all areas of learning, including attractive and inviting role-play areas. Adults model language and play well in the role-play spaces. This develops children's confidence and learning. During the inspection, a group of children invited the inspector into the 'hairdressers' in Reception. In their enthusiasm to restyle hair, their talk was confident and their enjoyment evident.
- In Nursery, children show high levels of pleasure when in the kitchen role-play area. Their play is co-operative, developing their skills of working together as they pretend to cook different meals.
- Routines are well established in all early years classes. For example, in the two-year-olds' class, children sit together to have their snacks. They are confident in taking their

coats, hats and gloves off and washing their hands before they sit down. Adults encourage them to use language. During the inspection, when they sat down for their snack, adults encouraged them to use the words bagel, orange and apple. They showed confidence in making choices to go out and play or be inside and play. Relationships are very positive and warm.

- Teachers plan learning activities that engage the children's interests. Children are keen to learn and they are inquisitive and enthusiastic. They behave well and co-operate well together. Adults use praise to encourage sharing and care for one another. Adults are quick to intervene if children appear off task.
- Children are developing a love of books. They are beginning to apply their knowledge of phonics in their reading and writing. The quality of handwriting is a strength in early years. Children have many opportunities to share books and to practise their writing with adults in the settings. However, not all phonics teaching is equally effective in the early years.
- Staff maintain detailed and accurate assessments of what the children can do and of their next steps. Staff seek advice and guidance from external agencies to support children with additional needs and their families. As a result, they are fully integrated in all classes and make good progress. Staff are caring and nurturing. They celebrate the pupils' small steps in learning.
- Parents say staff communicate well with them. They value the opportunities to attend workshops and other school events. 'Magic moments at home' are shared with the school and captured in the children's individual learning journeys.
- All statutory welfare requirements are met. Staff understand and follow school procedures. Appropriate staff ratios are maintained and all children have an identified key worker. The early years environments are safe and well maintained. The pastoral care of the children is a high priority.

School details

Unique reference number	103976
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10058467

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	483
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lee Maskell
Headteacher	Miss Liz Hart
Telephone number	0121 422 5336
Website	www.brandhall.sandwell.sch.uk
Email address	liz.hart@brandhall.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 to 19 October 2016

Information about this school

- Brandhall is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- A breakfast and after-school club are provided for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the early years leader.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, listened to pupils read and observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' books from different year groups and different subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 59 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 21 free-text responses. Inspectors spoke to parents before and after school and took account of one letter received.
- Inspectors reviewed the nine responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, governors' minutes, the use of additional funding, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors considered leaders documents about pupils' progress and teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, leaders of subjects, pastoral care, phases and special educational needs. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and the local authority adviser.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Beardmore	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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