



# Briar Hill Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 125563  
**LEA** Warwickshire  
**Inspection number** 281960  
**Inspection dates** 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter Callow AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Coppice Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Leamington Spa
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		Warwickshire CV31 2JF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01926 422834
<b>Number on roll</b>	268	<b>Fax number</b>	01926 450423
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Richard Hawke
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ruth Fennell

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281960
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Briar Hill is a large infant school. It has a very stable population of pupils, with a much higher percentage than the national average coming from minority ethnic groups, particularly Indian. A much higher proportion than normal have a first language that is not English but only a small number are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below the national average, but is increasing. A growing number of pupils are now entering school with poor skills in speaking and listening.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Briar Hill is a good school that provides good value for money. The actions taken to improve the school since the last inspection have been successful and inspectors confirm the school's view that its effectiveness is good. Good teaching has helped pupils to reach consistently higher-than-average standards by the time they leave in Year 2. Strong leadership has improved the provision for pupils with learning difficulties so that it is now good. Pupils work and play in a safe and caring environment where respect, responsibility and co-operation are encouraged. As a consequence, their personal development is good and they behave well. Pupils enjoy coming to school because teachers make lessons interesting and there are lots of opportunities for practical and creative work. Teachers' planning and the effective use of teaching assistants help to ensure a good match of tasks to pupils' abilities. The majority of pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, but some pupils make less progress in reading and writing because they enter school with poor language skills. Pupils make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. They reach good standards because good teaching meets the needs of these young learners. Good leadership and management by the senior management team means that groups of pupils who have lower standards in reading and writing are getting additional support. However, the school's system for monitoring individuals' progress across the school is not fully implemented. As a result, their achievements are not yet tracked carefully enough to ensure that every pupil makes as much progress as he or she can in reading and mathematics. The school's recent record of improvement and the rigour and effectiveness of its self-evaluation means that it is well placed to continue in its drive to become an outstanding school.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the progress of lower-attaining pupils in reading and writing by providing additional support, particularly in speaking and listening.
- Improve whole-school record keeping systems in order to ensure that pupils make as much progress as they can in reading and mathematics.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

**Achievement and standards** The standards and achievements of pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are good because they meet challenging targets, teachers have high expectations and there is a consistent quality of teaching across the school. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science have been significantly higher than average over the last five years. Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection because pupils are making more progress in reading and writing. Children enter school with a range of standards in all areas of learning, which is similar to that found nationally. However, the number of children who start school with difficulties in speaking and listening is increasing. The school identifies these children at an early stage and liaises well with the Speech and Language Service.

There is no significant difference in the standards of minority ethnic pupils and other pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also reach good standards. Boys generally achieve particularly well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well, making good progress in most aspects of their work. This is because the next steps in their learning are clearly identified in their individual education plans and their progress is carefully monitored. The progress of lower-attaining pupils in reading and writing, however, is a little slower because these are the pupils who are entering school with lower-than-average standards in speaking and listening. The school has a number of strategies in place to develop these skills, which are necessary to support their progress in reading and writing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, reflecting the strong emphasis the school places on valuing each child. Pupils' positive attitudes to each other and to their learning are evident throughout the school. Pupils' outstanding cultural development is the result of the school furthering their knowledge of different cultures through religious education, music and art. Whilst pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now good, opportunities to promote it are not explored in the same exciting ways as cultural development. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They feel safe and free from bullying. They are confident in the support of staff, should any problems arise. Pupils are aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles, recognising the importance of diet and physical activity. They say that they greatly enjoy the sporting activities provided by the school. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They take on responsibilities readily and conscientiously. The school council is active and has suggested improvements to playtime resources and toilet facilities. Pupils often take part in fund-raising activities for people in other parts of the world. The range of responsibilities and opportunities provided for pupils, together with the good progress they make in English and mathematics, prepares them well for the next stage of education and later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good teaching is based on effective working partnerships between teachers and pupils that result in orderly classrooms, which enables pupils to make good progress. However, some pupils lack confidence to respond to teachers' questions. Classroom environments are arranged well and pupils' work is shown to be valued in attractive displays. Well-planned lessons often make use of games which assist pupils' concentration and enhance their enjoyment. Consequently they often achieve a lot in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported, enabling them to progress well. Teaching assistants are effective in support of groups of pupils with

their work. There is mostly a good match of task to pupils' abilities so that they are challenged to think and work hard. Some of the marking is very good, but greater consistency is needed in indicating to all pupils what they need to do to improve. Teachers often follow up pupils' questions and ideas. A pupil in a mathematics class in Key Stage 1 wondered whether cutting rectangles in half always produced squares. The pupils were given the opportunity to investigate to find out. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good and the staff have a very good understanding of young children's needs and how they learn. This helps the youngest children to get off to a very good start.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The well-organised and effectively planned curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements. There is a very good emphasis on creative work, such as art and music. There is a wide range of opportunities to investigate and work practically which help pupils to remember what they learn. Subjects are thoughtfully linked so that pupils can see the connection between different aspects of their work, and this helps to reinforce learning. In religious education, for example, pupils make connections between food and religious practices. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics. Pupils profit from visits made to places of interest and visitors, such as a toy maker, who make a valuable contribution to the excitement in learning. The school has introduced some extra-curricular activities since the last inspection, which pupils enjoy, but the range is limited. The Foundation Stage curriculum is planned very effectively. Very good use is made of the outdoor areas, which contributes significantly to the youngest children's development. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language is good. Growing attention is being paid to pupils who have special talents and are gifted in learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's care for its pupils is good and teachers' knowledge of their pupils supports them in their work and development. The welfare of pupils is at the heart of the school's work. Arrangements for child protection are good and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Pupils work and play in a safe environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are carried out regularly and the school site is secure. Pupils are routinely reminded of the need to take care, for instance, when taking part in physical education lessons. The school's system for regularly assessing pupils' standards in writing has proved to be a good model in monitoring the progress that they make. The reminders in individual target cards for writing are a good example of how the school is helping pupils to take more responsibility for improving their own learning. The system has recently been extended to include reading and mathematics. This does not yet, however, include a means of indicating individual targets to pupils

so that they are not aware of their next steps in learning to the same extent as in writing.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The school has done an accurate and thorough evaluation of how well it is performing, identifying both its strengths and weaknesses. The higher standards and the good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities that have been secured since the time of the last inspection reflect the strong leadership of the headteacher. The members of the new senior management team undertake specific roles in improving the school very well. The school has correctly identified the need for them to work more closely together in planning for the school's improvement. The supportive governing body is well led by a knowledgeable Chair. It recognises the need to play a greater role in developing the strategic vision of the school and a more significant part in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The consistency of the high standards reached by pupils in the Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 1 is the result of effective leadership and a rigorous approach to school improvement. For example, focused speaking and listening activities and the greater use of role play and drama are being used to develop the reading and writing skills of lower-attaining pupils.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children We enjoyed visiting Briar Hill Infant School recently and watching you at work and play. Thank you for talking to us and explaining what you were learning and what you thought about your school. What we liked most about your school • You come to a good school where your teachers have worked very hard so that you all get better at your reading and writing. • Those of you who find learning difficult get a lot of help from all the adults who work in your school. • You are kind to one another and you behave well. • You are taught well and your lessons are made more interesting because your teachers include practical activities which you enjoy. • You are safe and well cared for. • You have exciting new places where you can play outside and you are reminded how important it is that all of you are happy. What we have asked your school to do now • Make sure that those children who find reading and writing difficult can make good progress. • Keep good records of how well you are doing in your work so that teachers know whether you are doing the best that you can. Yours sincerely Peter D Callow Mr P Callow Lead Inspector Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)