

# The Brent Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118589
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	291181
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tom Simpson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	393
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Harper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Nicholson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	London Road Stone Dartford DA2 6BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 223943
<b>Fax number</b>	01322 224201

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving a socially mixed community. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is below average overall and well below average in language skills. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language, including those who are at an early stage of English acquisition, is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has successfully addressed most of the main issues of the previous report. For example, standards in Years 3 to 6 have improved significantly over the past three years and teaching in this part of the school is now much better than it was. The school has received national and local recognition for this improvement. Successful strategies developed by the school in the recent past include extending the approach to learning practised in the Reception classes into Year 1, improving the system for tracking pupils' progress as they move up through the school and providing a more creative curriculum. Together with the enthusiasm and commitment of staff at all levels, this means that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils achieve well, progressing from below average standards when they enter the school to reach average standards by the time they leave. The improvement in pupils' progress over the last few years is a direct result of good teaching. There are still times, however, when work set is not matched closely enough to the needs of some pupils. Provision for children in the Reception classes is good, which means that they get off to a good start, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in gaining the skills they need for their future learning. There has been some underachievement in the past in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils are making much better progress now. Standards in these years are improving, although they are still below average. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved significantly each year for the past three years, and pupils have made good progress in relation to their starting points. Despite the school implementing a good number of strategies for improvement, such as creating stronger links between literacy and other subjects, standards in writing are still weaker than those in other subjects throughout the school. The pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of English language acquisition are well supported so that they make similar progress to the others.

One of the most significant strengths is the good leadership and management provided by the headteacher and other senior staff. This has had a profound impact on school improvement, including the achievement of the pupils and the quality of their learning experiences. For example, all members of the senior leadership team strive to achieve higher standards while making learning more relevant and interesting for the pupils. Another key strength is the effective personal care and guidance provided for the pupils. This has a positive impact on their personal development, which is good. Several parents expressed confidence in the care provided for their children and the quality of the education provided for them. One parent wrote: 'We are very impressed with all aspects of the school'. The pupils are well behaved in school and positive about their work. Most are keen to learn. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in moral and social education. The school provides a good, enriched and increasingly creative curriculum which is contributing well to the rising standards in Years 3 to 6 and to the quality of pupils' learning. There is a good number of out-of-school activities.

### What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that work set for pupils is accurately matched to their abilities
- improve standards in writing throughout the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good, and improving, although standards are still below average in Years 1 and 2 and there are still some weaknesses in writing throughout the school. Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start and their progress is often good, particularly in gaining the skills that will prepare them effectively for their later learning. Nevertheless, by the time they reach Year 1, their standards are still below average. In 2006, Year 2 national test results were exceptionally low in writing and mathematics. The causes of this are now being successfully addressed by the school and standards here are rising again.

Standards in the Year 6 tests in 2006 were average, representing a steady improvement over the past few years. Analysis of the school's tracking system, as well as a scrutiny of the pupils' work, indicates that this improvement is being maintained and built on. For example, a higher proportion of more able pupils in Year 6 are now reaching the standards of which they are capable.

By the time they leave school, pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, have made good progress against their starting points. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very positive about the school. They are proud of being a part of it and feel very involved in the wide range of activities that are available to them. They enjoy taking responsibility and contribute effectively to several areas of school life. They feel that their opinions are listened to and acted on by the school management. For example, the highly proactive school council has been involved in strategies for improving pupils' attendance and behaviour. Pupils enthusiastically support those less well off than themselves through fundraising events such as an 'Eat your Maths' project to support Red Nose Day, and supporting the Tsunami appeal. The pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and the school has recently gained the Healthy School status. Pupils consistently adopt safe practices and told inspectors that 'if you are lonely in the playground, there is always somebody to play with'. Pupils are polite and friendly. Their behaviour is good. Despite the school's rigorous efforts to improve attendance, this is still below average, although improving. Through experiences such as the school council managing its own budget, pupils are gaining a good range of skills to prepare them successfully for the adult world.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching in the Reception classes ensures children settle well and make good gains in all the areas of learning. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 has improved over the last few years. Although inconsistencies in its quality in the recent past in Years 1 and 2 have led to some underachievement, the good teaching in all age groups currently across the school is now having a positive effect on pupils' progress and in raising standards. Pupils are managed well, which leads to good behaviour and good relationships. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' performance and use the information well to set targets.

Lessons are well planned and pupils know what they are expected to learn because outcomes are shared with them at the start. The level of challenge provided enables the majority of pupils to make good progress. However, there are a few instances where work is not matched well enough to the needs and capabilities of different groups of pupils which means that some do not achieve as well as they might.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Recent initiatives and improvements to the curriculum are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result of these changes, pupils, especially boys, appreciate the more varied, practical and cross-curricular approaches which are making lessons more enjoyable. Some Year 6 pupils reported how much they learned from dressing up and acting as pupils at a Victorian school. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 gained much from writing in role as a person who witnessed the Great Fire of London. A good range of out-of-lesson activities, including a Year 6 residential visit to France, also enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal development. The school is working in partnership with a local secondary school to establish a cultural link with India. Strategies have also been put in place to encourage and develop writing skills throughout the school. Whilst they are beginning to make a positive impact on progress and standards, they have not been in place long enough to have raised pupils' overall achievement in this area. An extensive range of well-planned learning opportunities in the Reception classes enthuse children and prepare them well for Year 1.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils are well cared for and guided on a personal level. For example, they are encouraged to write down their thoughts about both negative and positive things that they have experienced during the school day. Effective procedures for child protection and safe staff recruitment are in place, and there are good links with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are also well supported, and their progress is carefully monitored. The school has a high level of regard for pupils' health and safety and has established a comprehensive range of risk assessments. Arrangements for supporting those pupils for whom English is an additional language are effective. The use of individual academic targets is developing well. Much marking of pupils' work is of a good quality. However, there is still inconsistency in the use of marking to guide pupils as to what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides strong effective leadership and direction. She has a clear vision for improving pupils' quality of education and raising standards further. She is well supported by the relatively recently constituted senior leadership team, whose members individually and corporately have a significant role in the forward development of the school. They have successfully promoted several recent initiatives for improvement, including raising the achievement of more able pupils and providing a more enriched and relevant curriculum. Through the quality of their own teaching, they provide good role models. However, the role of a few

subject co-ordinators is not as well developed as it might be and they do not all have as much impact as they should on improving standards and provision in their subjects.

The governing body is supportive and actively involved in the life of the school. There are rigorous systems in place for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school life. One successful outcome of this is an improvement in the quality of teaching. A major strength of the management at the school is the impact it has had on raising standards in Years 3 to 6.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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**Annex B**

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

25 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brent Primary School, Stone, DA2 6BA.

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. You told us how much you like your school. We enjoyed our visit and now want to share with you what we thought about your school. We found that your school provides you with a good education.

Here are some of the things that we found to be particularly good:

- you are well behaved; you enjoy your lessons and are good at helping people who are less well off than yourselves
- you are well cared for, supported and guided by the adults at the school
- you have a good curriculum provided for you and you are well taught
- the headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school even better and to ensure that you are reaching higher standards in your work.

To help the school improve, we have asked the teachers to:

- make sure that the work you are set is well matched to your ability
- help all of you to improve your standards in writing.

You can help by working hard in lessons and practising your writing skills at every opportunity.

With best wishes

Dr Tom Simpson Lead Inspector