



Braunston Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121963
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292278
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Braunston
School category	Voluntary controlled		Daventry
Age range of pupils	4–11		NN11 7HF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01788 890494
Number on roll (school)	193	Fax number	01788 890494
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Paul Rowe
		Headteacher	B J Parfitt
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular school has an above-average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment on entry is broadly similar to that seen in most schools but a significant minority of pupils start school with weaknesses in some aspects of language and mathematical development. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. None are at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well and standards are above average in Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well and they too make good progress. In the Foundation Stage, provision and progress are good and standards are as expected nationally.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy school. They feel safe and they know how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living and they make a good contribution to the community. Overall, they are well prepared for their future economic well-being, particularly in their work as Eco or school councillors. All of this is the outcome of the good care, guidance and support they receive. Within this, the academic guidance given to pupils varies between classes. Pupils' targets are not sufficiently broken down to help their learning in all classes and teachers' marking is not consistent in showing pupils how to improve their work. This sometimes limits progress, especially for more-able pupils, who have too few opportunities to pursue learning by themselves. Senior managers are in the process of tackling these matters. A good, well-planned curriculum supports teaching, learning and personal development effectively, and the quality of teaching is good.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior management team. The headteacher's quiet, purposeful leadership and the measured approach to introducing and evaluating new initiatives give the school a very clear educational direction. This has helped to build a strong and effective team of staff with whom the headteacher says she is 'privileged' to work. Staff have been deployed well in subject teams to maximise the use of their expertise in making the curriculum more relevant and meaningful for the pupils. This work is relatively new, however, and its impact is not yet fully evident. Governors fulfil their roles satisfactorily and while they make informal visits to classes, they rarely question the school about its performance. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. It knows what it needs to do to improve and how to do it. The improvements so far and the robust manner in which the school tackles any weaknesses show it has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' marking, make pupils' targets more specific and provide pupils throughout the school, especially the more able, with even more opportunities to think for themselves and work independently.
- Give greater clarity and purpose to the visits made by governors to sharpen their role in holding the school to account for its performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and almost all reach the standards expected nationally for the end of Reception. Achievement is good in the rest of the school and standards overall are above average. In Year 2, they are higher in reading than in writing and mathematics. In Year 6, pupils do better in mathematics and science than in English. Year 6 pupils do not perform as well in the writing tests as the work in their books suggests they should. The school's analysis of test papers shows that more able pupils do not apply their writing skills well enough in test situations. The school is working hard to improve standards further. The measures it has introduced to improve writing throughout the school have led to better progress during the current year in all age groups.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well and make good progress towards their targets. The school sets itself ambitious targets and it works hard to meet them. In the 2006 national tests, a few more able pupils did not reach high enough standards in mathematics. The school has introduced a 'Brain Academy' for more able mathematicians in Year 6 which is now helping them to reach higher standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school from the time they start and attendance is above average. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The vast majority behave well and regard the school as a friendly place where bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and quickly dealt with by staff. They have high levels of respect for each other and for staff, secure in the knowledge that their ideas are valued and their concerns taken seriously. As a result, they feel safe and well cared for. Through the 'playground friends' scheme, the school council and the 'Eco team', pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community. For example, their contribution to the re-organisation of the playground has resulted in happier, safer playtimes. Pupils also contribute well to the wider community by, for example, raising funds for various charities at home and abroad.

Because they know they will always be helped, pupils are sometimes too dependent on their teachers and have not yet developed a real sense of responsibility for their own learning. This is largely because there are too few opportunities for them to do so.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Learning is made particularly exciting for children in the Reception class. It is well planned and the teacher skilfully adapts activities to meet the children's needs as they arise. The children's faces were a joy to behold as they played the part of dragons and responded to the teacher's questions about how they would feel if they were left out, as the dragon had been. They showed great care and consideration for others.

With guidance from the deputy headteacher, teachers use the information they gather from assessing pupils' work to group pupils and identify which groups are in need of most support. They plan pupils' work accordingly and their planning shows clearly the different levels of work they intend pupils to do. The good relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils trust staff to help them and want to do well. However, activities are sometimes too closely directed by the teacher, leaving pupils, especially the more able, with too few opportunities to explore different avenues of learning. This limits their progress. The school knows this and the systems are being adapted to provide more independent challenges for these pupils. Good additional support is given to pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports pupils' health, safety and well-being and contributes effectively to their learning, personal development and enjoyment of school. Through its strong ECO focus, it gives pupils a real sense of how to care for the world around them. Links between subjects are planned well, and this gives greater meaning to pupils' learning. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, often enabling them to reach at least average standards in the national tests.

The good attention paid to developing basic skills is helping pupils to make better progress in writing. Initiatives to help more-able pupils to do better overall have increased pupils' motivation and improved their ability to find things out for themselves. However, it is too early to assess the full impact of these initiatives on pupils' achievement and there are not enough such opportunities available to pupils at present. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a good range of additional activities, visits and visitors during and outside normal school hours. Lunchtime clubs are especially popular.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school places high value on the care, safety and well-being of its pupils and has rigorous procedures to safeguard them. Pupils are confident they can talk to staff or other pupils if they have any concerns. The school uses its good links with external agencies effectively to support pupils, including those with learning difficulties or

disabilities. In some classes, pupils help to assess their own and others' work and therefore begin to understand how to improve their own progress. This good practice is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers' marking is not always helpful in this respect either, particularly in helping the more able pupils to reach the higher standards of which they are capable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team successfully maintain a clear focus on raising pupils' achievement and ensuring their good personal development and well-being. A dedicated and capable staff share the headteacher's high aspirations for the pupils. The senior management team is working hard to secure the best possible use in all classes of the relatively new systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress to meet these aspirations.

Teachers with subject responsibilities have recently been re-organised into teams. This is successfully raising their awareness of their shared responsibility for pupils' overall progress. This work is at an early stage. However, it is already resulting in better links between subjects and better teaching of basic skills, including writing, across the curriculum.

Governors support the school satisfactorily but their role in checking its performance is underdeveloped. For example, their visits to classes are too informal, being based on interests rather than on checking the things the school is trying to improve. This limits their usefulness in holding the school to account. The headteacher's checks on teaching and learning are rigorous, accurate and comprehensive. They leave teachers with very clear pointers for improvement, which are followed up. All managers check teachers' planning and pupils' work, moderating standards and working together effectively to improve pupils' learning. The recent improvements in writing and mathematics bear testimony to this, and the school's good links with other local schools contribute effectively to it.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You clearly enjoy school very much, and are very enthusiastic about your work on the Eco committee and as school councillors. You and the vast majority of your parents are right in thinking you go to a good school but there are also some things the school could do to be even better. Here are some of the good things:

- you are taught well and most of you work really hard. You are given interesting things to learn and this helps you to make good progress
- most of you behave well at all times. This is because the school cares for, guides and supports you well and therefore you care for and respect adults and each other
- you know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy, and you are well prepared for the time when you leave this school
- the headteacher and senior managers run the school well. They try hard to make sure your teachers do all they can to help you make good progress in your learning.

We have asked your school to help you make even better progress by:

- improving the way teachers mark your work, making your targets easier for you to understand, and giving all of you, especially those who are capable of reaching higher levels, more opportunities to find things out for yourselves
- making sure that when governors visit your classes, they take the opportunity to check whether the school is making enough progress in the things it says it wants to improve.

We hope that, as a result of these improvements, you will make even more progress in the future and that you will continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, throughout your lives.