

Brentfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101496
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	307709
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Bradley Simmons HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	477
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms P Witham
Headteacher	Mrs P Riddle
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	41-43 Meadow Garth London NW10 0SL
Telephone number	020 8965 5326
Fax number	020 8453 0316

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors, accompanied by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Brentfield is a large primary school with 477 pupils on roll. The school serves a relatively disadvantaged area of north-west London. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is much higher than the national average. Just over 31% of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), a percentage which has risen steeply over the past three years. A very high percentage of groups are from a number of black minority ethnic backgrounds. Many of these pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). Eight out of ten pupils are drawn from a council ward which is significantly deprived. The school is very popular with parents and is oversubscribed. A larger proportion of the pupils at Brentfield enter or leave the school part way through their primary education than is usual.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brentfield is a good school. It has some outstanding features and is well led by a headteacher who is committed to building a provision that is inclusive and allows pupils to thrive. In this, she is effectively supported by the acting deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher who successfully maintained the impetus to improve the school during the headteacher's absence during the spring term of 2007. Over the past few years, the progress made by pupils at the school has speeded up. In 2006 and 2007, pupils made very significant progress. This is because of a focus on the part of leaders to eradicate the unsatisfactory teaching found at the time of the previous inspection and to build a curriculum that inspires pupils. In both areas, they have been successful. The result is that, in 2007 for the first time, Year 6 and Year 2 pupils attained standards which match national averages.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy their education because of the thought that has gone into building a curriculum which is coherent and which meets the needs of pupils. Its only flaw, which the school recognises, is that medium term planning for subjects other than English, mathematics and science does not yet ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding, and particularly their skills, are progressively developed week by week and year by year. That said, the school has worked to good effect to ensure that the curriculum is effectively underpinned by progressive learning objectives in English, mathematics and science. The use of outside groups to provide inspirational sessions each week for pupils is a highly effective innovation. During the inspection, pupils' performing arts skills and self-confidence were boosted as they worked with a visiting opera group. Such experiences, combined with a judiciously considered curriculum, underpin pupils' excellent cultural development.

Behaviour is good because the school ensures that pupils receive unambiguous guidance. A small number of parents are concerned about the procedures used to deal with bullying. Although no evidence was found that bullying is a problem at the school, inspectors agree that the anti-bullying policy lacks clarity with regard to the school's staged response to bullying. Pupils' social and moral development are outstanding. They are polite, respectful to each other and to the staff, and welcoming to visitors. The school's good systems for settling its youngest children and new arrivals includes a buddying system; pupils who undertake these roles demonstrate excellent care for those they are helping which makes a considerable contribution to the whole school community. Staff work hard to maintain the good levels of behaviour observed. The courtesy with which pupils treat supply staff and visiting teachers exemplifies their success in this area. The school's excellent systems for building levels of attendance and to improve punctuality have paid dividends since the previous inspection. Attendance is now above the national average.

Pupils display a good understanding of the choices they need to make to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Several parents are rightly unhappy about the state of pupils' toilets. The school has plans to refurbish these and is clearly aware that it needs to rethink urgently procedures for dispensing soap and paper within toilets.

Older pupils display a far greater understanding of what they need to do to improve their work than at the time of the previous inspection. Challenging targets for each pupil have contributed to the rise in standards and progress seen since that time. The school is not yet setting annual cohort targets or targets for different groups of pupils and analysing progress towards these.

Change has been necessary and rapid at Brentfield. Its pace has left some staff feeling fragile. The headteacher accepts that, following her absence, it is time to strengthen her presence around the school, giving greater opportunities for all staff to feel that their views count.

Nevertheless, the considerable success achieved by all who work at the school to improve outcomes for its pupils is testament to good leadership at all levels. The school is held effectively to account by an interested and well informed governing body. In combination, these factors underline the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The youngest children get off to a good start in the school. They settle quickly into the Foundation Stage because of good induction arrangements and strong links with parents. The high quality learning environment and well planned activities place an appropriate emphasis on early literacy development and personal and social education. The well planned curriculum ensures that there is an appropriate balance between learning through play and direct teaching. As a consequence of the good provision and the quality of teaching, together with accurate assessment, children make good progress so that by the time they leave they are working close to the levels expected for their age. The Foundation Stage benefits from good leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen medium term curriculum planning for non core subjects to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively developed.
- Set annual targets for reading, writing and mathematics for each cohort and group and ensure these are analysed effectively.
- Improve toilet provision.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils enter the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are well below those normally expected. This is particular marked in relation to communication, language and literacy skills. Good provision ensures that children make good progress in their Nursery and Reception years and, as a result, by the time they leave the Foundation Stage, their skills and abilities are just below those expected for children of this age. This represents good progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils maintain this good progress so that by the time they leave Year 2, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is securely in line with national averages. For the past two years, pupils leaving Year 6 have made significant progress during their time in Key Stage 2. Additionally, Year 6 and Year 2 pupils in 2007 were the first group of pupils to attain standards in English, mathematics and science which matched national averages. Pupils with EAL, and those with learning difficulties make good progress throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal and well-being is outstanding. Collective worship provides pupils with calm moments for focused spiritual reflection. Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. They support each other as learners and individuals,

and are very welcoming and helpful to visitors and to new classmates. Pupils' behaviour is good, although a few pupils lack the maturity to keep themselves focused on the job in hand.

The school's initiative to ensure that pupils bring a healthy packed lunch has had a very positive impact. Those pupils who choose from the range of good hot lunches offered demonstrate a good awareness of the importance of a balanced, nutritious meal. Pupils display a real zest for learning. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community; they raise money for charity, act as buddies to newly arrived children, and undertake monitorial duties responsibly and very effectively. Rising standards, together with opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) tools independently and participation in mini enterprise projects, mean that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and are the prime reason for pupils making good progress. Teachers manage pupils well and relationships are very good, creating a purposeful and happy learning environment. In the best lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge and questioning strategies effectively to extend pupils' learning, challenge their thinking and assess their progress. Teachers use time targets effectively to create a sense of urgency which increases the rate at which pupils learn. ICT engages pupils effectively and promotes good independent learning skills. For example, in a reception class, individual programmes were used well to reinforce pupils' phonics learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to add extra challenge to pupils' work. In a few lessons, teachers fail to optimise the use of ICT to support learning.

Most teaching assistants work well in lessons to provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and for pupils at the early stages of learning English. Occasionally, teaching assistants are given tasks to undertake with insufficient guidance; in one instance, a parent was justifiably concerned that his child's homework had been wrongly marked.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Since the previous inspection, staff have worked to good effect to improve curriculum planning. The curriculum is now good and has some exemplary features. A very good range of school trips are planned and used effectively to enhance pupils' enjoyment and to focus learning in a particular area. The school acknowledges that it needs to strengthen medium term curriculum planning for non core subjects to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively developed.

The use of outside partners to provide regularly weekly enrichment activities during the school day is highly innovative. A wide variety of extra curricular activities, as well as opportunities for instrumental tuition, further enhances pupils' desire to excel at school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils in a safe, enjoyable and secure environment. Support provided to new arrivals is very good; these pupils are well

supported by buddies and they receive effective professional counselling if they are unsettled. All staff understand the robust measures in place to safeguard pupils. Pupils say they are happy to talk to teachers if they have a problem. One summed it up, 'Teachers are always there helping you to understand things'. Pupils' academic guidance in Years 4, 5 and 6 is good although for younger pupils it is not as effective in supporting their progress. Older pupils evaluate their progress against their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leaders provide clear educational direction for the school. They ensure that staff undertake a professional development programme which supports the drive to raise standards. Challenging targets are set for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and there are plans to extend this good practice into other year groups. All staff understand the system of data collection and use it successfully to analyse performance and raise standards. The school does not yet analyse the performance of groups over time, although they are aware of underperformance of a minority of pupils. They have made considerable efforts to engage this group of pupils and their parents with variable success. Rightly, parents have confidence in the school. Governors are supportive yet effective in their monitoring role and in setting the strategic direction with senior leaders. They are not afraid to take difficult decisions and are knowledgeable about the school and the community they serve.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brentfield Primary School, London, NW10 0SL

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school this week. We enjoyed our visit very much.

I am writing to tell you what we found out.

- Your school has improved since the last inspection.
- You work hard. You are making better progress and reaching higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils were when the school was last inspected four years ago.
- Your headteacher, Mrs Riddle, leads the school well and all the staff are helping her to make Brentfield a good school for you.
- You behave well, and come to school really regularly.
- You are exceptionally polite, look after each other and treat each other and adults with great respect.
- You really enjoy school because of the work the adults have done to make sure you are taught well and because lots of activities are very well planned and interesting.

Amongst all the good things, we thought your school could do a few things better. We have asked teachers to make sure you get good opportunities to build on your skills in all subjects. We want your teachers to set challenging targets for you for the end of each year and not just in Year 2 and 6. This will make sure that they keep a very close eye on how quickly you are working through your personal targets. We also want the toilets to smell nicer, and to have soap and toilet paper available all time. Mrs. Riddle says that some of you play with the soap and toilet paper and block the toilets, so show her you can be trusted! We also said that everyone needs to make sure your work is marked correctly.

Good luck in the future and keep working hard and enjoying school!

Best wishes

Bradley Simmons

Her Majesty's Inspector