

Great Bradfords Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114984
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311778
Inspection dates	8–9 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	361
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Ogan
Headteacher	Mr James Couves
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Marlborough Road Braintree Essex CM7 9LW
Telephone number	01376 326 739
Fax number	01376 552 672

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized popular junior school. It shares a site with the adjacent infant school, the majority of whose pupils transfer into the juniors. Entitlement to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with a first language other than English are both below national averages. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to schools nationally. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is typically about average. The school has been awarded Investor in People status. It has also achieved the Healthy Schools Award and Inclusion Quality Mark.

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. Many positive features of the school combine effectively to ensure pupils achieve well and make good progress. As a result, pupils achieve above average standards by Year 6. Part of the reason for pupils' good academic achievement is the school's success in fostering their good personal development and well-being so as to provide a very good basis for learning. In many lessons pupils show much self-confidence and willingness to solve their own problems. These personal qualities combine with pupils' good progress in literacy and numeracy to prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Pupils have responsible attitudes, behave well and enjoy positive relationships with teachers and fellow pupils. They are keen to learn, and respond well to challenges. Good arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support help them feel happy and safe at school. All this makes pupils enthusiastic learners who say they enjoy school greatly and which is borne out by good and improving levels of attendance.

Pupils closely follow the school code of conduct, 'Be safe, be kind, be responsible'. Their positive attitudes reflect both the good teaching and the good curriculum. In the best lessons the teaching is outstanding. These lessons often make learning fun and engage pupils' interest well. However, teaching varies in its effectiveness, and in some lessons progress is slowed as a result. Frequently, teachers assess pupils' progress well and use their findings to plan lessons that suit pupils' needs. However, there are a few occasions when some pupils of especially high ability are not fully challenged by their tasks. The curriculum is broad and stimulating. There are many extra provisions for learning and enjoyment through visits, events and additional activities outside of the classroom. Especially good opportunities for a wide range of physical exercise help pupils to stay healthy.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The headteacher leads with determination and dedication and senior staff promote an atmosphere in which all involved with the school, including parents and governors, work very well together to meet the pupils' needs, provide a good quality of education and promote high standards. Parents are consulted well and they think highly of the school. The school keeps a careful check on its own performance and this, together with some significant recent improvement in standards, points to a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the good practice that exists to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching across the school.
- Ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged by their tasks.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Following a two-year decline in the very high standards previously achieved, the school has made good, recent improvements. The school has increased the challenge to its learners, pupils' progress is good overall and standards above average by Year 6 as a result. Support is particularly effective for lower and average attaining pupils, and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but opportunities to develop the standards of higher achieving pupils are sometimes missed. For example, the 2007 results for English showed higher achievers to perform less well than pupils nationally. The school effectively

tracks the progress of its pupils, and this information is used to inform the next steps of their learning and progress as a whole. This helps the school to effectively prioritise learning and ensure that pupils make good progress. For example, the school is working successfully to raise attainment in writing because it has rightly judged its performance in this area to be relatively weak in comparison to that in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. They generally give their best and take pride in their achievements. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because it is embedded in the life of the school. Pupils grow in self-awareness, think in moral terms and reflect upon their feelings and actions. They are invariably courteous and polite. Pupils' behaviour is good and they enjoy positive relationships with their teachers. They are very respectful and supportive of one another, sharing and celebrating each other's achievements.

Pupils have a good understanding of being safe, kind and responsible. They learn particularly to treat others in the way that they themselves like to be treated, and to make the right choices about what they are going to do. They understand these are important codes by which to live. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and personal safety. They look after one another very well. Pupils play an active part in the life of the school; organising fund-raising for charities, contributing fully to the life of the school and offering their ideas to improve lessons, the school and its grounds. Pupils are building good foundations for later life and developing the skills they need for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers promote very positive relationships and attitudes to learning. This results in pupils enjoying lessons. They behave well and work hard. An increasing number of pupils take responsibility for their own learning. The teaching seen during the inspection was mostly good and sometimes outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge and feature practical and creative activities that engage pupils and give them opportunities to solve problems and to practise what they have learned independently. In these lessons, pupils are very clear about what they are expected to learn, and teachers use the results of marking very effectively to match work to the needs of all pupils. Consequently, pupils make good or better progress. However, these principles are not consistently applied and where this is less effective pupils' progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has a good focus on developing pupils' basic skills. It is strengthened by some good opportunities for active and practical learning which are increasingly being delivered in more exciting and creative ways. However, the effectiveness of these developments is more evident in some classes than in others. A well thought out programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education results in pupils making healthy and safe choices. Thematic days and weeks are enjoyed by pupils, help their learning and provide lasting memories. A developing

programme to promote pupils' economic understanding provides added stimulus to their learning and help to prepare them well for their lives beyond school. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer, as well as the many enrichment opportunities provided by educational visits, visitors to the school, and through the excellent partnership with the local community. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures to promote good behaviour, safety and trust are rigorously pursued by all staff. There is a good focus on promoting the social and emotional development of pupils throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable are supported well. This is strengthened by the school's effective collaboration with a range of external support agencies that further support learning for these pupils. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils are securely implemented.

Clear and detailed messages are given to pupils and parents about how well pupils are doing, encouraging parents' involvement in their children's learning. More effective systems for monitoring pupils' progress to targets have been introduced which help ensure that potential underachievement is identified early. These systems are not yet embedded fully across school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed, and the school shares a strategic vision that is successfully focused on raising standards. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has created a positive ethos for professional development and school improvement. This common purpose is shared by colleagues across the school, and staff work together and support each other very well. The newly established leadership team is enthusiastic and hard working, and they are having a growing impact on school improvement. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been particularly rigorous. Areas for improvement are identified clearly in the comprehensive school improvement plan that sets out how priorities are to be met. The school enjoys the confidence of parents, and good links are carefully maintained to promote and develop this partnership. Governors are effective in their work, and hold the school to account well for its performance. Senior leaders have a clear and accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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.

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

10 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Bradfords Junior School, Braintree, CM7 9LW

Thank you for making the other inspectors and me feel so welcome at our recent visit. I would like to tell you what we found out about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

There are lots of things that I like about your school. Some of them are:

- you achieve good standards and make good progress
- you behave well and get on well with each other
- you enjoy school and the school is good at organising lots of interesting things for you to do
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after
- your headteacher, and all of the other people who help run your school, are very good at making sure that you get a good education.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think that the most important thing to do next is to make all your lessons as good as the best ones. We also think that teachers need to make work even more challenging for more able pupils.

I certainly enjoyed talking with you and finding out all about your school. Keep on working hard, doing your very best and enjoying your time at school.

Ian Jones

Lead inspector