

Brindley Heath Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124094
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328050
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2008
Reporting inspector	David Cox

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 (total)	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Langford
Headteacher	Sheila Cowan
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
School address	Enville Road Kinver Stourbridge DY7 6AA
Telephone number	01384 872343
Fax number	01384 872343

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brindley Heath Junior School is larger than average. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brindley Heath Junior School provides its pupils with a good education. Parents are happy with the school's provision and appreciate the good quality education their children receive. A typical parent's comment encapsulates the school's successes: 'My daughter loves attending Brindley. She is confident and looking forward to becoming a prefect.'

The good care, guidance and support, together with a good curriculum, support pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils are very happy at the school and enjoy the many enrichment activities that help to develop their excellent social skills. Pupils' work in art is outstanding and is greatly enhanced by their trip to Walsall Art Gallery. All pupils have access to additional music tuition and the school's string orchestra is recognised as one of the best in the county. Behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are very sensitive to the needs of others and form strong friendship groups. There are friendship benches in the playground area and older pupils look after the younger pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic, confident and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning. They know how to stay safe and healthy. Good development of basic skills means pupils are well prepared for secondary school and their later lives. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community through such activities as the school council, fundraising and parish activities. They have a good understanding of the wider world, exemplified by their links with a school in Mer, France, which is supporting the development of French language in the curriculum.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress because of the good quality teaching they receive. Standards of attainment are above average by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. Standards of reading and writing are above average and pupils are highly articulate. This is because of the rigorous approach the school has adopted to developing key literacy skills. The vast majority of pupils achieve well in mathematics. However, the problem solving skills of the more able boys do not develop as rapidly because there have not been enough planned opportunities to develop these skills.

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. Her clear vision and sheer determination to overcome the obstacles presented by long-term staff illness has enabled the school to make good progress since the previous inspection. The school community works well together. The school's view of its strengths and areas for development is accurate, arising from effective self-evaluation. The systems for monitoring the work of the school are generally good, but lack a sharp enough focus to ensure consistently good practice across the school. Governors offer good focused support that ensures good leadership and management at all levels, and which secures the school's good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the problem solving skills of the more able boys by ensuring all staff match tasks more closely to the needs of these pupils and by further broadening the curriculum opportunities for them to develop these skills.
- Ensure that monitoring is more sharply focused in order to achieve greater consistency of practice across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils arrive at the school in Year 3, their skills and knowledge are above average for their age. The school undertakes extensive testing when pupils join the school. Measured against these tests, pupils make good progress. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards of attainment overall are above average and pupils' achievement is good. The vast majority of pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. However, the mathematical problem solving skills of more able boys do not develop as rapidly because work is not as well matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Their social development is outstandingly good and they participate well in the school council, clubs, fundraising and other opportunities to work together. The Christmas carol service demonstrated pupils' confidence and pride in their school and their ability to work together as a team. Their behaviour in lessons and throughout the school day is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, which they are able to express clearly. Pupils have a sound knowledge of different faiths, but opportunities for them to reflect and develop spiritual awareness in assembly are not always taken.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They can explain which foods are good for them and why it is important to take exercise, although some still bring sweets to school. They consider school dinners to be healthy. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and do so readily. They make a good contribution to the school and to wider communities.

Pupils' development of future workplace skills is good. Their literacy and numeracy skills are good and their ability to relate to others and to listen and understand means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their school life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and learning assistants work well together. They have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of behaviour. The good support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to play a full part in activities. Pupils are engaged well by good use of resources, including interactive whiteboards, and display very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils always know the purpose of lessons, and what they have to do to be successful. They are encouraged to work independently. Work is not always well matched to the needs of more able boys, particularly in mathematics where there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their skills of problem solving. Whilst marking is frequent and supportive, it does not always model clearly enough how teachers want pupils to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum provides many exciting tasks from the time pupils join the school. Good enrichment opportunities make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment and good personal development. All pupils have the opportunity to learn a string instrument, with many performing in venues such as Wolverhampton Civic Hall. Pupils are very proud of the 'Thought Tree' sculpture, which was constructed through partnership with a professional sculptor. Good links with a local secondary school have helped Brindley to achieve the Active Mark and Healthy School status. The school has rightly identified that there needs to be a greater focus on developing pupils' mathematical problem solving skills and has just purchased computer software to support pupils. However, it is too early to measure the impact on improving pupils' skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care for pupils is outstanding. As a result, pupils feel secure, confident and well informed. Child protection procedures are robust, and health and safety procedures are effective and well managed. Attention to personal welfare sets pupils a good example and they know that there are adults at school they can trust. Pupils know well the procedures to help them to deal with bullying. The school deals exceedingly well with pupils who have severe emotional and behavioural problems and has very good procedures in place to manage their difficulties. Provision for pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

The school's tracking of pupils' progress is very thorough. However, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do next to improve their skills and knowledge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

All staff work well together and there is a strong team spirit. The headteacher is well respected and knows the school and its families well. Parents have high expectations of the school. Community cohesion is promoted well, as the school has good links with the local, national and global communities. Good leadership and management are successfully improving the quality of provision and providing an environment where pupils can thrive. For example, the condition of the building and the learning environment has been vastly improved along with the information and communication technology (ICT) provision. This is one example of the good progress made since the previous inspection. All this has been achieved despite a number of staff being absent because of long-term illness. The governors bring a wide and relevant range of skills to their roles. They work well with senior leaders to monitor the school's progress towards reaching its targets. The school has good systems for self-evaluation although inconsistent practice is not always identified or eradicated.

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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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brindley Heath Junior School, Kinver, Stourbridge, DY7 6AA

Thank you all very much for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently. We were impressed with you all and the way you were very happy to tell us about your school. You and your parents are rightly proud of Brindley. Like you, we think your school is good. There are so many good things to report about your school. Here are the main ones.

Your headteacher and staff want the best for you and are determined that you make as much progress as you can in lessons. Because you really enjoy school, attend well and work hard, you make good progress and reach above average standards. Those of you who need extra help make the same good progress because the staff give you lots of attention to help you learn. Teachers know you well and generally ask you to do quite demanding work. There are lots of good things that happen in your classrooms. You also have lots of exciting opportunities through visits and projects, such as your visit to Walsall Art Gallery.

You go to a caring school. The school helps you to gain confidence in yourselves and you all have excellent attitudes to learning. We saw you all working hard in school and enjoying your activities. Your behaviour is excellent and you are polite to visitors. You show a good awareness of how to stay healthy, although some of you still bring sweets to school. You enjoy the many extra activities, such as learning to play an instrument. You show consideration for others and are friendly and helpful to each other. We liked the way the school council works to improve your school. You have a good knowledge and understanding of cultures from around the world.

- To make your school even better, we have asked your teachers to do two things.
- Give you boys who are more able further opportunities to develop your skills of solving mathematical problems.
- Check more closely that teachers are all doing the same good things when planning your lessons.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.

Yours sincerely

David Cox

Lead inspector