

Braunstone Frith Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120031
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	329662
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	229
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	110
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Hasman
Headteacher	Pauline Martin
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Liberty Road Leicester LE3 6NN
Telephone number	0116 2872487
Fax number	0116 2872487

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving an area of social disadvantage on the western outskirts of Leicester City. The majority of pupils come from a White British background. Just over a third come from minority ethnic groups with a small percentage in the early stages of speaking English. A small number of pupils are from Traveller families. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to most schools. Standards on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) cover a wide range, but overall are below those typically found. The school has received nationally recognised awards including Healthy School and Investor in People status. When the school was last inspected in November 2006, it was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school has been through a turbulent period over the last two years, but all leaders and staff have shown a strong determination to improve. This, coupled with better oversight by the governing body, has seen Braunstone Frith Infants emerge as a stronger and better school. Since the previous inspection, improved assessment information, better tracking and clearer guidance have helped increase rates of pupil progress and raise standards. Standards are now in line with those found nationally and achievement is now satisfactory. The school is working more closely with parents and carers to promote good attendance.

Children get off to a good start in the EYFS, with most making good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 they are close to the goals expected for them, although there are weaknesses in reading and writing. From Year 1 onwards, standards have risen significantly since the last inspection. Improvements in teaching, underpinned by better planning and assessment, mean that pupils now make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time. By the end of Year 2, standards are close to the national average, although some higher attaining pupils do not make the progress they should. Additionally, some pupils targeted for extra support have not made the expected levels of increased progress. School leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils have the essential skills that will equip them more fully for the next stage in their education and for later life.

There are still differences in the quality of teaching from one class to the next, but the inadequate teaching noted at the time of the previous inspection has been eradicated. The right actions have been taken to identify where improvement is needed and to provide appropriate training and resources for staff to strengthen provision further. The school provides a satisfactorily broad curriculum with an appropriate range of additional activities. However, work to develop the curriculum by linking subjects together to make it more interesting and enjoyable for pupils is at an early stage. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school is a calm and orderly community that provides good pastoral care for its pupils. It is in a strong position to cope with day to day challenges. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. The friendly, supportive atmosphere helps pupils grow in confidence, enjoy learning and behave well. The school has begun to involve parents more fully in their child's learning.

Leadership and management, including governance, are now satisfactory. The school's improvement has been the result of a clear sense of direction, of determined leadership, accurate self-evaluation, the hard work of staff and their willingness to embrace changes. Staff are united in their commitment to move the school forward. Subject leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know what they have to do to improve. Much care has been taken to ensure that all the recent improvements are sustainable. This has been achieved through a combination of good appointments, effective professional development, the implementation of clear policies and secure systems, and careful financial planning. These changes indicate that there is sound capacity for further improvement. Community cohesion is satisfactory, although links with community groups require further development.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for children in the EYFS. When children start in Foundation 1 their skills are lower than found nationally. They achieve well because teaching is good. There are good systems to keep track of children's progress, to guide their next steps in learning, and to identify those who may need additional support. As a result, by the time they leave Foundation 2, standards are close to expectations in most areas of learning. However, they remain below in communication, language and literacy, especially in reading and writing skills. Children are well cared for by a strong team of experienced teachers and nursery nurses. The system of home visits before children start school eases their transition and helps children to settle quickly. There is a strong focus on personal development and social skills. Children develop good levels of independence and positive attitudes. This is because there are plenty of opportunities for them to make choices about their activities as well as a good balance of adult directed tasks. Consequently, children enjoy their learning and develop good working habits from the start. For example, the newest entrants have already learnt to tidy up at the end of lessons in response to music. Leadership of the EYFS is good and strives for improvement. Staff have rightly identified the need to improve the quality of outdoor provision and the need to further develop children's early writing skills through role play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that attainment is raised for all pupils, but particularly for higher attaining pupils and those who need extra support.
- Further develop the curriculum so that it is more interesting, exciting and relevant for all pupils.
- Develop community cohesion by establishing stronger links with community groups and involving parents and carers more in their child's learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Currently, standards are broadly in line with the average at the end of Year 2, although fewer children achieve the higher levels. In the past, pupils' progress was adversely affected by a high turnover of staff, occasionally weak teaching, and a number of more able pupils leaving the school. These difficulties have now been remedied. Progress is satisfactory overall from Year 1 to Year 2. Pupils who need extra support with their learning, Traveller children, and those with English as an additional language are soundly supported. This ensures that they achieve satisfactorily in relation to their abilities. However, some pupils targeted for extra support have not made the levels of increased progress expected because the programmes are not delivered in the prescribed way and some pupils participating have not been identified precisely enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They like their lessons and the friendships they make. They feel safe and secure and know there are adults to turn to should the need arise. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Although a small number of pupils display challenging behaviour, this is managed well. Pupils have a sharp sense of right and wrong, enjoy the rewards for good behaviour, and are clear about the sanctions if they misbehave. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils show respect for one another and form positive relationships. However, their awareness of different cultures is limited. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe around the school and in lessons. They have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils readily take up the opportunities for active games at break times and have an adequate understanding of the need for regular exercise. Pupils are developing satisfactorily as good citizens, for example by caring for the environment and recycling waste materials. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to promote good attendance by setting up systems of rewards, such as Cool Cats, and by working with parents and the Education Welfare Service. Although the attendance rate has improved, it continues to be adversely affected by a small, but persistent, minority of families.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is uneven. The use of assessment to support learning is not consistent across the school. As a result, work does not always accurately meet the needs of individual pupils. Where teaching is good, pupils make good progress. The best teaching is characterised by clear learning objectives, good pace, high expectations and challenge. Where teaching is less well pitched to pupils' needs, the pace is slower and less well focused. Consequently, not all pupils are sufficiently challenged to achieve their personal best, particularly some more able pupils and those who find learning more difficult. Most pupils behave well. The school has a strong focus on developing a consistent approach to the management of behaviour. Learning support assistants play an effective role in ensuring pupils who find learning more difficult, Traveller children, and those in the early stages of learning English, make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and on encouraging all pupils to communicate. Pupils enjoy their information and communication technology (ICT) lessons and there are satisfactory opportunities for them to consolidate their ICT skills across the curriculum. Changes in planning are being implemented to move the curriculum from subject based provision to one which makes better links with pupils' learning. However, these are at an early stage and have not had a significant effect on children's achievement or on standards. The satisfactory range of activities outside normal lessons, including sports clubs and visits, contributes to pupils' personal and social development. The curriculum does not consistently meet the needs of all children as those with higher abilities do not achieve to their potential. The curriculum provision for vulnerable pupils in the nurture group is sound and has a positive impact on the academic progress they make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care provided for pupils is good. All statutory safeguarding procedures are met. All adults know the pupils well and show a high level of care for them. This contributes to good relationships, positive attitudes, and the good behaviour of the majority of pupils. Good support is provided by outside agencies. Vulnerable pupils, including those with behavioural problems and those at early stages of learning English, are well supported in the nurture and speech and language groups. As a result, their confidence and self-esteem develop well. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Better assessment procedures have been implemented since the last inspection and provide more accurate information about each pupil's progress. Teachers are increasingly making better use of this information to plan lessons. However, further work is required to match work more precisely to the needs and capabilities of all groups of pupils, especially the more able so that they are consistently challenged and extended. Pupils are aware of their targets in English and mathematics and are keen to progress to the next level. Marking has improved considerably and is more effective in guiding pupils' next steps in learning. As a result, pupils are clearer about what they need to do next to improve. The partnership with parents is strengthening because the school is reaching out to engage them more in the life and work of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

All staff and governors have worked hard to improve the school and their dedication and commitment have paid dividends. This is now a positive and optimistic school. The procedures for self-evaluation are satisfactory. Through the introduction of improved tracking procedures and pupil progress meetings, senior leaders are carefully analysing pupils' performance and identifying where there is potential underachievement. Teaching and learning are being monitored regularly and the acting headteacher and subject leaders have a clear understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses lie. However, rapid school improvement has been somewhat hampered by frequent staffing changes. The leadership team recognises that it needs to be more effective in raising the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 in order to accelerate pupils' progress and boost achievement. To this end, good teachers have recently been located in each year group to provide support for colleagues in an effort to increase rates of pupil progress. The school improvement plan is at an early stage of development but appropriately identifies the key priorities for future development. Governors are supportive and increasingly effective in evaluating the school's work. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Leaders recognise the need to involve parents and carers more in their child's learning. In addition, they are beginning to forge stronger ties with other groups in the community, such as the children's centre and neighbouring schools.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

16 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Braunstone Frith Infant School, Leicester LE3 6NN

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection of your school. You made us feel very welcome and we thoroughly enjoyed spending time with you. We decided that your school has improved a lot in the last eighteen months and we have taken it out of the group of schools which we have to visit every term. This means that the Braunstone Frith Infant school now gives you a satisfactory education.

- You get on well with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- You enjoy school, feel safe and most of you behave well.
- The adults in school are working hard to help you learn and to make sure that you are well cared for, valued and supported.
- Your teachers help you make satisfactory progress in your work.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make sure that the school gets even better.
- We have asked the school to do three main things to help it improve further.
- Make sure all of you, especially those of you who learn quickly and those who need extra help, do as well as you possibly can in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make the work that you do more interesting and exciting so that you enjoy your learning even more.
- Share all the good things you are doing at school with your parents and carers and work closely with other schools in the area.

You can help your teachers by always working hard and behaving well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston Her Majesty's Inspector