

Branfil Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135588
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	341673
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Davies

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Weston
Headteacher	Andrew Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 1900
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, observing 17 teachers and visiting all classes at least once. Inspectors observed the school's work, including learning taking place in short periods outdoors and during routine activities of the day. Inspectors had discussions with governors, members of staff, parents and groups of pupils and partners of the school. Inspectors looked at pupils work in their books and on display, the school's policies and records, and took into account the questionnaires received from 217 parents, 48 members of staff and 98 older pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the leadership and management since the formation of the school
- the learning and progress of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, focusing on the progress of those with higher attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and all pupils in mathematics.

Information about the school

Branfil is a larger-than-average primary school. It was established in September 2008 by the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools on the same site. The headteacher was appointed at that time and the deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2009. The large majority of the pupils are White British. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. The governing body provides a before-school breakfast club for pupils each school day from 7.45 am to 8.45 am.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Branfil is a good school that has achieved a lot in a short space of time. Senior leaders and managers have focused their attention on building a skilled workforce to ensure that pupils make as much progress as they can in all subjects and enjoy their time in school. Parents comment positively about their children's experiences at the school. Most parents and staff feel that change has been managed well. A parent who has experienced the change said:

After being at Branfil for 6 years now, I feel there has always been a good rapport with both teachers and parents. Having helped out in the school, I can see what a happy place it is and how all the children are like a real family unit. [The headteacher] has managed to bring a really nice feel to the school.

The school made a very realistic appraisal of its effectiveness at the end of the first year after the amalgamation. Managers took tough but decisive action to overcome the slow progress for some groups of pupils and the low attainment of the Year 6 group in 2009, particularly in mathematics. School data is used systematically to evaluate the impact of measures taken. This involved moving teaching and support staff into areas of the school that were new for them. In 2010, at the end of the school's second year, Year 6 pupils attained standards in English and science that are above average and well above average in mathematics.

Children make an excellent start in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. Wider outcomes for pupils' personal development throughout the school are good because, as parents and carers, and pupils comment, staff are extremely caring and are readily available to meet their children's needs. This approach results in good relationships between staff at all levels with pupils and sensitive, well-targeted pastoral and teaching support. Pupils act responsibly and courteously which helps with the pace of lessons throughout the school. They are motivated by the praise they receive for doing well and take pride their achievements. Priority is given by staff and governors to ensuring the security of pupils within the large school site.

The school uses every inch of the premises and the outdoor environment to extend informal and additional learning opportunities. The rich curriculum, including learning a musical instrument, swimming and sport helps make school an enjoyable place for most. Pupils say 'there's always something exciting for us to do' and inspectors agree that opportunities are stimulating for most pupils, although activities do not always extend the skills of the more-able pupils. The opportunities for learning about diverse communities and cultures outside the immediate area are limited.

Inconsistencies in teaching are being tackled, but methods of setting, recording and

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tracking pupils' targets vary from class to class, as do ways of carrying out teachers' assessments of how pupils are getting on while they learn. Marking is satisfactory in most subjects and years, but some contains too little guidance for pupils about how to improve.

Middle managers are beginning to be called to account by governors, as are class teachers, and the school has introduced the sharing of good practice within the school and with other partner schools. The improved progress in mathematics demonstrates what the school can achieve and its good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning by:
 - using the targets that teachers set across all subjects and classes
 - increasing the level of challenge in all lessons to all pupils, particularly the more able
 - ensuring assessments are carried out while pupils are learning, and not only at the end of pupils' work, so that pupils know how they are getting on
 - ensuring that marking informs pupils how to improve their work
 - increasing the impact of middle managers on the monitoring and assessment of teaching and learning and their contributions to the evaluation of the school's progress.
- Provide more opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of diverse cultures and communities beyond the immediate area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

A strong focus on securing consistently good progress and learning throughout the school is beginning to pay dividends. Achievement is good. Most groups of pupils progress well in all subjects, although there is some variation in rates of progress between year groups in Key Stage 2. Because of improvements in teaching and the curriculum there has been rapid improvement in the standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in 2010. Pupils' results exceeded the school's predictions and attainment is above average, and is well above in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Younger pupils learn and achieve well, with strengths in reading and mathematics by the time they move on to Year 3. Throughout the school vulnerable pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points because teaching assistants are well deployed and interventions are targeted to meet individual needs.

Pupils evidently enjoy their school life. They are keen and attentive in class, responding enthusiastically to a curriculum and activities that take their needs and interests into account. Many extend their learning through the breakfast club, lunchtime and after-school sports and recreational activities. Because of parents' and carers' support

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and pupils' positive attitudes to school, attendance rates are above average.

Pupils say that they feel safe and bullying, which is rare, is generally dealt with effectively. Behaviour is good. From the earliest years in school pupils show remarkable social skills, chatting politely and working cooperatively in groups. Pupils apply enterprise skills to running a healthy tuck shop at breaktime and in organising charity collections. They show real consideration for each other. Many want to do their best for the school and community through belonging to the school council or being designated as a positive playleader to help others at lunchtime. Parents and carers and pupils agree that the school helps pupils to make healthy eating choices in school. Music, singing and arts activities support pupils' spiritual development and frequently bring the school and immediate community together for concerts.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching across the school is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting lessons and activities for their groups of pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are motivated and keen to do well. One pupil said that lessons are

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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'realistic – they feel like real life' and pupils throughout the school expressed positive views. Lessons include practical tasks, such as preparing a written and printed presentation on the computer or setting up shops and keeping accounts, so that pupils improve their skills. Teachers make very good use of physical movement around the indoor and outdoor environment of the school, capitalise on informal learning opportunities and are beginning to make the most of the school's good information and communication technology resources.

Sessions at the end of lessons are mostly used well by teachers, with the support of skilled teaching assistants, to check pupils' understanding, praise achievement and extend learning. The good practice in mathematics, of setting individual targets, marking and assessing work to challenge and extend the most-able pupils' skills, is beginning to show results. This good practice is shared among teachers but is at an early stage in having an impact in other subject areas.

Cross-curricular links are used to good effect, for example, when pupils' musical knowledge and vocabulary are exploited in work in science on sounds or when measuring accurately in design and technology and science. Regular school trips to zoos, the coast and museums, and participation in cycling proficiency, ecology awards, sports and music competitions all enrich learning. A partnership with a local special school has helped teachers and managers shape the curriculum for pupils with speech and language difficulties and for some pupils with specific disabilities.

Good care, guidance and support provided to all pupils are at the heart of the school, a feature which is valued highly by most parents. Work with multi-agency groups is well coordinated and support for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contributes significantly to their well-being and progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team has driven the school's ambitions forward successfully, and they have put effective new structures in place since the formation of the school. Senior leaders and governors have rapidly established the ethos of a unified school with a staff team that works together increasingly effectively, bringing improvement in teaching and learning with the last year. Many parents and carers, particularly those who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, say that the new school is 'a change for the better' and is already giving their children improved chances because of

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the continuity in their child's schooling.

Senior managers use data well alongside their routine monitoring of teaching to judge performance and guide them in making future plans. The appointment of a new senior manager with expertise in mathematics has acted as a catalyst for improvement across all subjects along the introduction by the assessment leader of systematic data analysis and the sharing of good practice among all staff.

Governors give good support and challenge to the school. They give a strong lead on providing a secure environment in the school and healthy eating. All safeguarding procedures are in place and work well. Partnerships with other schools in the locality and children's services agencies in the borough, that help the school to provide for pupils who have additional needs, are good. Equal opportunities policies are well developed. The school knows and serves the local community well and has an audit in place as a basis for developing links nationally and globally to benefit children and to promote community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception classes. They feel happy and safe, gaining confidence in talking about the world around them. Staff have established the best environment possible, by adding texture, colour and print to stimulate learning. The excellent routines for learning are well understood by the children. There is a very good balance of imaginative activities led by adults and opportunities for children to practise skills, to play and explore confidently on their own

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or in small groups. Resources are neatly to hand and accessible to children. Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve and allow them to flow freely between indoor rooms and outdoor spaces. Consequently, children show outstanding independence, filling their time purposefully and taking rest or drinking fresh water when they need to.

Children develop outstanding personal and social skills. They cooperate and play together productively and are sensitive to each other's needs. Adults intervene rarely, and when they do, their attention is focused on moving children's learning along. Children sit without close supervision and discuss with wonder 'what is inside an orange?' as they peel it themselves at snack time.

Staff build in plenty of time to observe children closely. They maintain excellent evaluative records and as a result activities are very well planned to take account of each child's needs and preferences. Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully structure opportunities so that, for example, in phonics lessons the children understand exactly what to do and they make outstanding progress.

Relationships between staff and parents are exceptionally good. Parents' views are fully taken into account in the care and education of their children and contribute to the staff's evaluations of their children's progress. Parents value the staff's expertise. Because of a close partnership with the pre-school playgroup on the same site, children's needs are well understood when they join the Reception class. Children benefit from unbroken support and are well prepared with every skill that they will need for learning when they transfer on into Key Stage 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parental questionnaires were very positive and most written comments expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school. A number of comments praised the senior leadership team and staff for achieving so much in such a short space of time. Many were highly appreciative of the improved transition from Key Stage 1 to 2. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns about inconsistencies in the school's management of behaviour and/or bullying and the inconsistencies between classes. These concerns are not reflected in the majority of parents' comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Branfil Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 216 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 434 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	153	71	57	26	4	2	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	147	68	66	31	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	143	66	67	31	5	2	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	124	57	79	37	11	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	122	56	84	39	7	3	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	129	60	78	36	7	3	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	135	63	80	37	1	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	100	46	97	45	15	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	106	49	98	45	10	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	88	41	102	47	19	9	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	96	44	96	44	15	7	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	129	60	71	33	10	5	5	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	136	63	70	32	8	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Branfil Primary School, Upminster RM14 2LW

We really enjoyed our recent visit to your school to see you at work. You made us feel very welcome and you spoke very positively about your school life. This letter sets out some of the things we found. You reported that Branfil Primary is a good school and we fully agree with you. All staff and governors work hard to make your building safe and your learning enjoyable and stimulating. Most parents and carers are happy with the school. In particular, we liked these things about your school.

- You behave well, are kind and considerate to each other and get on well together.
- You make good progress.
- You feel safe and secure and you like to eat healthily and take plenty of exercise.
- You have plenty of exciting things to do that extend your learning.
- You thoroughly enjoy lessons. Your attendance is really good, too.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders plan improvements very carefully and check to see that their ideas are working.
- All staff take good care of you and make sure that you are safe.

Everyone at Branfil wants the school to be even better and we have asked the staff and governors to help you develop an awareness of different cultures and to help all pupils to make progress by:

- improving the use of targets that teachers set in all subjects and classes
- challenging those of you who find work easy, so that you can do even better in all subjects
- ensuring teachers' marking and advice lets you know how well you are doing and what you have to do to improve your work
- ensuring that teachers with responsibilities improve teaching and learning even more

We wish you all every success in your future education and life.

Yours sincerely

Christine Davies

Her Majesty's Inspector

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