

Branwood Preparatory School

Stafford Road, Monton, Eccles, Manchester, M30 9HN

Inspection dates	1–3 July 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school because

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is good, with much that is outstanding in Key Stage 2. This is because the staff have good subject knowledge and use well-chosen activities to enable pupils to make at least good progress.
- Pupils' safety and behaviour in lessons and around the school are outstanding. The school provides a caring environment and, as a result, pupils are eager to learn and show high levels of respect for each other.
- The proprietor and leaders ensure that all the standards for independent schools are met, so that achievement and teaching are good and pupils are safe.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are highly committed to the school. As a result of their effective management of staff and resources, the standard of teaching and pupils' achievement is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress as they move through all phases of the school.
- Teachers' comments in pupils' workbooks do not always provide pupils with clear guidance on what they must do in order to improve their work and make outstanding progress.
- The school leaders' systems for checking the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' progress are not sufficiently rigorous and precise.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day’s notice.
- The inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by nine members of staff and scrutinised samples of pupils’ work.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, senior teacher (soon to become headteacher), governors, members of the leadership team, pupils and a small number of parents and carers. There were 36 responses to the online Parent View Survey.
- Questionnaire responses from 20 members of staff were considered.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including policies and procedures, records of pupils’ progress and individual pupil progress files. Inspectors listened to pupils from Year 6 and Year 2 reading.

Inspection team

Jonathan Yodaiken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Walsh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Branwood Preparatory School of Monton is a co-educational independent primary school which was opened in 1928. The school is located on a spacious site of two acres.
- The school is registered for 190 pupils. It currently has 148 pupils on roll between the ages of three and 11 years and all attend full time. Thirty seven children are funded under the government nursery grant scheme. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school aims to provide a secure, happy and caring environment in which high educational standards are attained, so that pupils can go on to the secondary school of their choice.
- The school was last inspected in October 2008.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding, so that all pupils make rapid progress, by:
 - sharing the excellent practices present in Key Stage 2 with other classes to enable all pupils to make outstanding progress
 - ensuring that teachers' marking in pupils' workbooks provides guidance on what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve further and achieve higher standards.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing a more consistent and robust system for tracking pupils' learning, so that there is a better analysis of data on how well pupils are progressing over time
 - ensuring that the school's system for checking teaching and standards is more consistent and precise, and focuses on the quality of learning for pupils at all levels of attainment.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement is good because teaching is strong. Pupils display outstanding attitudes to learning and enjoy access to an extensive range of learning activities. The achievement of those with special educational needs is equally good.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are at least typical for their age in nearly all areas of learning, and above average for their age in speaking and listening. They make steady progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, with rapid progress in Years 4 to 6. The rapid progress in Years 4 to 6 is due to exceptionally strong teaching and the outstanding range of subjects and activities offered by the school. As a result, nearly all pupils in the current Year 6 exceed the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well prepared for the secondary school of their choice.
- Pupils of all abilities, including the most able, make good progress. However, the level of challenge provided for pupils of different abilities from the Early Years Foundation Stage up to Year 3 is not always high enough to enable them to fully develop their work so they can make outstanding progress.
- The sounds that letters make (phonics) are taught effectively. Teachers use well-chosen methods to explain the sounding of letters and adults support children effectively in the class. By the end of Year 2 they are confident readers who enjoy books and explain clearly what they do tackle hard words.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 have excellent reading and comprehension skills, and read widely across many subjects at levels above those expected. Examples of pupils' creative writing, in workbooks and on display, demonstrate good progress. Pupils use these examples on display to help them make accurate assessments about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. An example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson when pupils used a display which outlines 'ingredients of a gripping story' to upgrade their creative writing.
- In mathematics, activities are often based on real-life experiences such as money transactions. In this way, pupils successfully develop their number skills well and consider practical problem-solving calculations which are meaningful to them. An example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson when pupils estimated the sale price of an item subject to a 20% reduction.
- Scientific achievement is good and pupils generally enjoy this subject. However, teachers' planning in science is less well developed than in other subjects and, as a result, on occasions pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Science is often taught through topics in different subjects, for instance in English or mathematics lessons. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were given a task to choose a menu which could be used in next year's 'I'm A Celebrity - Get Me Out Of Here' programme. Pupils were asked to use their mathematical and scientific skills to design a dish, made up of rice and insects, which would proportionally use ingredients in the most nutritious way.
- Music is at the heart of the school and pupils thoroughly enjoy singing and playing instruments. The range of experiences and the tracking system in this subject are exemplary and, as a result, pupils' progress in music is outstanding. The annual summer show, which took place during the period of this inspection, provided an opportunity for Key Stage 2 pupils to showcase their outstanding abilities in song, dance and music to parents, carers and friends of the school.
- Work seen in art and photography was good and pupils make good progress in physical education. Progress in information and communication technology is somewhat inhibited due to the lack of up-to-date resources.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Teaching is good, ensuring that pupils achieve well and make good progress in all subjects including speaking, reading, writing and mathematics.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children generally learn effectively through a well-balanced range of adult-led and child initiated activities. Teachers help children to learn successfully about sounds and numbers and improve their speaking and listening skills. However, from the Early Years Foundation Stage up to Year 3, planning is not always detailed enough to fully meet the needs of all children and occasionally teaching assistants are not deployed effectively. This results in slower progress for some children in these classes.
- Teaching in Years 4 to 6 is often outstanding because teachers challenge and motivate pupils at all levels of attainment. Pupils respond well to the innovative learning activities often provided within lessons.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils to achieve well. They use a good range of approaches and resources to make lessons interesting and to facilitate good progress. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils rolled a dice on which there was a picture. This picture was then used as a trigger for creative writing, providing themes to write about.
- During lessons teachers often adjust the work according to how well pupils are doing. For example, in a Year 2 poetry lesson pupils started the session volunteering descriptive words associated with the seaside and went on to suggest higher level descriptive words.
- The teaching of English and mathematics are strengths of the school and provide pupils with a sound basis for good learning. This ensures that, for example, they have a good grasp of phonics and calculation. Teachers successfully integrate numeracy and literacy skills within topic work in science and in religious education lessons.
- Pupils are set homework that helps them consolidate what they have learned in school. All work is marked regularly and accurately. However, it does not always provide guidance on how to improve still further or show how well pupils are achieving against national standards.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. Pupils benefit from small class sizes in all year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, and they are very well cared for. All staff members have been trained in first aid.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning and work well in pairs as well as on their own. As a result, they make at least good progress, with outstanding progress in Years 4 to 6. They are quick to respond to a teacher's instructions and actively take part in learning, with nearly all pupils engrossed in the tasks set.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is almost always outstanding. They are confident individuals who do not hesitate to speak to the visitors. Pupils enjoy school and as a result they are exceptionally positive about school and their attendance is high.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school and there are few instances of bullying. They have a good awareness of how to deal with any bullying should it occur. Staff deal with any low-level behavioural issues swiftly.
- The school environment is a harmonious and friendly one, and pupils look forward to coming to school. One pupil commented, 'In our school we are like one big family.' Pupils are given opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, being lunchtime monitors and acting as 'big buddies' looking after younger children, but commented that they would like to have a school council.
- Pupils develop skills in assessing their own progress through looking at the excellent displays of their written work, artwork and photographs which celebrate their achievements. They are encouraged to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem through active participation in school assemblies, shows and events.
- Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to make altruistic decisions. An example of this was in an assembly where pupils were shown how a hurtful word which has already been spoken is not easily withdrawn. This was demonstrated by way of a tube of toothpaste being squeezed and the toothpaste was then shown to be almost impossible to

return to the tube.

- The school provides a number of valuable opportunities, particularly through religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), for pupils to learn about lifestyles and cultures other than their own. Especially noteworthy is the excellent attention to pupils' spiritual development in Year 3, where there is a major focus on learning about other religions.
- Pupils take part with enthusiasm in a range of fund-raising activities for charities, such as the work done by the school in aid of the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).
- The school's arrangements for ensuring the safety and security of pupils are outstanding. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are exemplary, and are implemented consistently by all staff. The school is highly successful in keeping pupils safe, whether in school or during activities off-site. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and when, for example, to report any inappropriate images.

Leadership and management

Good

- The quality of leadership and management is good, based on shared values and a commitment to provide the best for the pupils. The newly appointed headteacher, who will be taking up her post next term, works very well and in synthesis with the outgoing headteacher, who will be continuing as a key member of the senior leadership team and senior teacher.
- The headteacher and senior leaders demonstrate high expectations for what pupils can achieve and staff respond positively in all aspects of school life. They have ensured that pupils are provided with an outstanding range of subjects and experiences.
- The school's leaders have promoted outstanding teaching in Years 4 to 6 but this excellent practice does not yet take place in all other classes. The system for checking the quality of teaching is linked to arrangements for managing staff performance, but is not sufficiently focused on improving learning for pupils of all abilities. As a result, opportunities for mentoring linked to professional development are not as effective as they could be.
- The proprietor and governors work effectively with the headteacher and senior leaders. The school benefits from their rich experience and diverse expertise. The school has appropriate systems for reviewing its work and planning for future improvement. Members of the proprietorial body have an accurate view of how well the school is achieving its aims. However, they are less well-informed on what the school needs to improve further.
- The school has procedures for tracking pupils' attainment in all classes. However, this is not underpinned by sufficient rigour in judging how well pupils are progressing. As a result, teachers' planning does not always take into account fully how to challenge each individual pupil.
- Induction procedures are well established and support new teachers well. However, the school's approach to teacher training is not sufficiently systematic to ensure that the professional needs of individual staff members are fully met.
- In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents and carers expressed satisfaction with most aspects of the running of the school. All 36 who responded reported that their children are happy at school. However, some parents and carers feel that concerns raised with the school are not dealt with effectively. The small number of parents and carers spoken to by inspectors were also positive in their views of the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	105991
Inspection number	443501
DfE registration number	355/6004

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent Preparatory School
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Number of part time pupils	None
Proprietor	Branwood School Trust Limited
Chair	Mr T Cramant
Headteacher	Kay Higginbottom
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,925
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