



**Children and Families Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**  
23 February 2010

**Report from the Director of  
Children and Families**

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

**Supporting schools to succeed**

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 This report aims to inform members about the lowest performing schools in Brent, the factors which contribute to their low performance and the actions taken by the LA and the schools themselves to address the challenges.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Members are invited to note:

- the improvements made by a number of low performing schools
- the action taken by schools and the School Improvement Service to secure improvements

**3.0 Detail**

3.1 Schools in an Ofsted category

There are currently 3 schools in Brent in an Ofsted category (see Appendix A). Two of these are schools judged by Ofsted as requiring significant improvement in one or more areas and which have been issued with a Notice to Improve. One has been judged to need special measures. This reflects inspectors' serious concern about the school's performance against a range of indicators, including standards and progress.

3.2 Over the last three years, (academic years 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 to date), there have been 8 schools in an Ofsted category.

3.3 Braintcroft Primary was judged inadequate (special measures) in November 2007 and came out of this category in November 2009.

Chalkhill Primary, which had been in special measures since November 2006, came out of this category in July 2009.

Kilburn Park School Foundation went into special measures in March 2006 and came out of this category in November 2007.

Lyon Park Junior went into special measures in October 2009, and is still in this category.

Newfield Primary was issued with a Notice to Improve in May 2008, and came out of this category in July 2009.

Stonebridge School went into special measures in June 2006 and came out of this category in March 2008.

3.4 Two secondary schools, Kingsbury High and Copland, were issued with a Notice to Improve in May 2009. The main issue in each case was the school's failure to meet safeguarding requirements.

3.5 The key factor leading to significant improvement in most of these schools was a change of leadership. As well as new headteachers being appointed to some of these schools, the establishment of soft federations has played an important part in securing improvement. The Chalkhill Primary / Oakington Manor Primary federation, due to end in March 2010, has been very successful. More recently, the substantive headteacher of Lyon Park Infants has now become Executive Headteacher of both Lyon Park Infant and Lyon Park Junior schools.

### 3.6 Other low performing schools

The key national indicators for measuring performance at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 are:

- % of pupils achieving Level 4+ in both English and mathematics
- % of pupils making 2 levels of progress in English from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2
- % of pupils making 2 levels of progress in mathematics from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2
- % of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics

Each year, schools are required to set statutory targets against these indicators.

- 3.7 The national agencies give close attention to the number of schools in LAs which do not reach the 'floor target'. The floor target for primary schools is now 55% of pupils achieving Level 4+ in both English and mathematics. This floor target has been in place for the last two years. Even before the combined English and mathematics indicator became a statutory target, the national agencies used this data as a benchmark for judging school performance. For secondary schools, the floor target is 30% of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs, including English and mathematics. Schools where performance falls below these floor targets are identified as performing 'below the floor'.
- 3.8 When primary schools fall below this floor target for a significant period, more than 3 years, the National Strategies, on behalf of the DCSF, designate those schools as 'Hard to Shift'. To date, 2 primary schools in Brent have been designated as 'Hard to Shift'. These schools received significant additional funding for 2 years as a lever to improve performance. They both made sound progress and no longer have this designation.
- 3.9 Currently, the School Improvement Service has no significant concerns about attainment or progress in 3 quarters of primary schools. Broadly, in those schools, attainment and progress are at least in line with national averages. In the remaining quarter of schools, attainment and progress may be below national averages overall, or in specific areas. In some of these schools, results fluctuate from year to year, or there is wide variation in performance between English and mathematics. In other schools, pupils do not always make expected progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 (2 levels of progress).
- 3.10 Over the last 5 years, a total of 19 primary schools have fallen below the floor target of 55%: 14 in 2005, 12 in 2006, 9 in 2007, 5 in 2008 and 3 in 2009. Of these schools, 8 have performed below the floor target for 3 or 4 years, and none for 5 years. These are the schools where the challenges set out below have the greatest adverse impact. This decrease represents a positive, declining trend in the number of low performing schools.
- 3.11 Prior to the current floor target being in place, the floor target for primary schools was previously identified as performance which fell below 65% in English and mathematics separately. On this measure, performance in 18 primary schools was below 65% in English over the last 5 years: 8 in 2005, 9 in 2006, 5 in 2007, 3 in 2008 and a dip, 9 schools, in 2009. Performance in only 4 of these schools was below 65% for 3 years or more.
- 3.12 Performance in mathematics fell below 65% in 23 schools: 13 in 2005, 15 in 2006, 11 in 2007, 7 in 2008 and 7 in 2009: overall a positive, declining trend. Performance in 10 of these schools was below 65% for 3 years or more.

- 3.13 The other key indicator of success is the percentage of pupils making 2 or more levels of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. On this measure, progress in English was below the national average rate of progress in 18 schools in 2007, 16 in 2008 and 12 in 2009. In mathematics, progress was below average in 22 schools in 2007, 22 in 2008 and 15 in 2009. Of these schools, progress was below average (for 3 years) in English in 4 schools, and in mathematics in 7 schools.
- 3.14 In 2009, there was 1 secondary school in Brent where performance against the 5+ A\*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics measure was below the floor target (an Academy), and 3 other schools (2 Academies) where performance was at or just above the floor target. Performance in 1 of these schools was better than in 2008, in 1 it was the same, and, in the remaining 2, performance declined.
- 3.15 A number of factors contribute to attainment and/or progress being below average:
- high pupil mobility
  - high levels of social and economic disadvantage
  - a high number of pupils with particular barriers to learning as a proportion of the school population
  - weak leadership
  - not enough good teaching

Where the above circumstances combine in particular schools, this compounds the degree of challenge.

- 3.16 The School Improvement Service regularly analyses the attainment and progress of pupils in each school, comparing these outcomes with Brent and national averages. This enables the Service to form an accurate overview of the performance of each school, as a basis for providing support and challenge for improvement.
- 3.17 School Improvement Partners (SIPs) play an important role in analysing performance, supporting schools in setting targets for improvement and identifying strategies to tackle weaknesses. Standards are reviewed in detail each autumn and progress in relation to raising standards is checked termly. SIPs are also key to brokering additional support needed to raise standards. Over time these inputs have had a positive impact on standards in many schools, although many challenges remain.
- 3.19 Other action taken by the SIS has included:
- the establishment of Federations and formal school partnerships
  - brokering secondments in order to secure adequate leadership capacity
  - implementation of specific programmes such as the National Strategies Improving Schools Programme

- the provision of other support and challenge in accordance with the LA's school improvement policy.

3.20 Partnership working with schools is strong. Headteachers and other senior school leaders engage in vigorous dialogue with their SIPs and other school improvement staff on effective school improvement strategies. Schools also make their own independent decisions about which steps to take in order to make progress.

3.21 Collaboration between headteachers themselves is another strong feature of working in Brent. There are many examples of headteachers seeking advice from other headteachers, without this contact being facilitated by the School Improvement Service.

3.22 Where schools have been successful in raising standards, they have, for example:

- ensured that all staff are held accountable for the outcomes achieved by pupils
- eradicated weak teaching
- made full use of pupil tracking information in order to identify and tackle underperformance promptly
- focused on enhancing the leadership skills of staff at all levels
- worked effectively with their governing bodies
- engaged productively with parents and the local community
- kept all aspects of the school's work under regular review, using the outcomes of self-evaluation to inform further action
- maintained a close focus on the personal development, health and well-being of all pupils
- ensured that an engaging and personalised curriculum is in place

### **Background Papers**

- Support for School Improvement
- Policy on Schools Causing Concern

### **Contact Officers**

Faira Ellks, Head of School Improvement

Director of Children and Families

## **APPENDIX A**

School	School below 55% English and Maths Level 4+				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Barham Primary School		*			
Braintcroft Primary School		*	*	*	
Chalkhill Primary School		*	*		
Christ Church CofE Primary School		*			
Donnington Primary School			*		
Fryent Primary School		*			
Furness Primary School	*	*		*	*
John Keble CofE Primary School	*	*	*	*	
Kensal Rise Primary School	*	*	*		
Kilburn Park School Foundation		*	*		*
Kingsbury Green Primary School				*	
Mora Primary School	*	*			
Newfield Primary School	*	*	*	*	
Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School	*				
St Andrew and St Francis CofE Primary School	*	*	*		
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	*				
Stonebridge Primary School	*	*	*		*

Number of schools in an Ofsted category within the academic year			
	2007-2008*	2008-2009*	2009-2010*
Primary	5 (4 SM, 1Ntl)	3 (2 SM, 1Ntl)	2 (SM) (Now 1)
Secondary	0	2 (Ntl)	2 (Ntl)
Nursery	0	0	0
Special schools	0	0	0
PRU	0	0	0
All	5	5	4 (Now 3)

\*academic year

SM = Special Measures category

Ntl = Notice to Improve category (requiring significant improvement in one or more areas)