

Brierley Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103776
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	363682
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorna Wood
Headteacher	Teresa Potter
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed all nine teachers and visited 17 lessons. They held meetings with the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, curricular planning documents, examples of the ways the school promotes community cohesion, evidence of the school's lesson observations and information from questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 37 parents and carers.

The inspection team looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively does the teaching and curricular provision promote good progress in writing?
- Are the teaching and learning good in each key stage?
- How well does the school give pupils a thorough awareness of different faiths and cultures?
- Is the school doing all it can to improve attendance?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school where the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also higher than most schools as is the number known to be eligible for free school meals. Compared with national figures, the number of pupils entering and leaving part way through their education is high. The school has recently gained a number of national awards. There are child care facilities before and after school run by the governing body.

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

This is a good school that has a justifiably high reputation in the local community. Parents and carers are pleased with the provision and their children's achievements. One parent/carer, typical of many, commented: 'Teachers put great effort into their teaching and extra-curricular activities to ensure my children get a good, well-rounded education'. Pupils enjoy school and make good progress so that attainment is broadly average by Year 2 and Year 6. Their writing skills, however, lag a little behind those in reading and mathematics throughout the school. This is because they are not always given enough time to write in lessons and the expectations of the quality of their writing are not always high enough in subjects such as science and history. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and try hard to improve their work. They have a good awareness of how to live healthy lives and explain clearly why they choose the healthy options at lunchtime. The school council reinforces this by encouraging all pupils to bring healthy snacks rather than sweets. Attendance rates are broadly average and improving as a result of rigorous work by the school to discourage unnecessary absences.

Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect deeply on issues and those in Year 5 wrote moving accounts of the plight of Jewish people during the holocaust. The staff apply the systems for encouraging good behaviour consistently so that pupils behave well. Acts of bullying or any form of racism are rare. Pupils learn something about different faiths and cultures, but there are too few global links or visits to different places of worship to give them a thorough awareness of others in the world live and pray.

The teaching and learning are good in both key stages. Pupils speak highly of their teachers who they describe as 'friendly', 'helpful' and 'always there to help them when they find things difficult'. A strength in many lessons is the way teachers make a point of always valuing pupils' contributions in class and this gives them the confidence to tackle challenging tasks. Teachers explain new concepts well and ask probing questions to make pupils think carefully. They have developed a good curriculum centred around themes, such as the history of medicine and the Second World War, that capture pupils' interest. A wide range of popular clubs at lunchtime and after school enrich the curriculum and improve pupils' skills in areas such as sport and music.

Parents and carers are right to feel adults care for their children well. Pupils feel safe, know who to turn to if they have concerns and appreciate the way the rules to encourage good behaviour are applied fairly and consistently.

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection particularly in the checking of pupils' progress and their attainment in mathematics and English, including writing although there is still improvement to be made in this. The headteacher leads with high expectations of all members of the school community and is supported well by other leaders. The leaders show a good awareness of the school's effectiveness based upon

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detailed tracking of the progress of all groups of pupils. They work effectively to rectify weakness and new measures to improve writing skills are beginning to bear fruit. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing to the levels reached in reading and mathematics by:
 - giving pupils more time to write in lessons
 - having higher expectations of their writing in all subjects.
 - Improve the school's support for community cohesion by:
 - providing more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn about different faiths and cultures
 - creating links with people and organisations outside the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Data from national test results and the evidence of pupils' learning in lessons show that they make good progress. In Key Stage 1, while standards are broadly average, those in writing are a little below those in reading and mathematics. Pupils enjoy reading, and many read for pleasure at home and school. They do well in mathematics because teachers give them many opportunities to use their number skills to solve problems. This was seen to good effect when Year 2 pupils calculated the total number of Aliens' eyes if they have seven each. They use exciting words to make stories interesting for the reader but their weak spelling and punctuation sometimes affects the quality of their work. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in reading and scan information on computers quickly to gain information. Their mathematical skills develop well and the vast majority are confident calculating quickly in their head and solving complex problems. Again, writing is the weaker subject. While pupils have some good ideas for their writing they often write too little in a lesson because they are given too little time. Their work is sometimes careless when writing in subjects other than English leading to errors in spelling and punctuation.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. They are supported well in class while enjoying good opportunities to work independently. Those with English as an additional language do very well and are often among the highest attaining pupils by the time they reach Year 6. Pupils entering the school at other than usual times make good progress because of the good systems to assess their needs and the effective support for them in class.

Pupils' good personal development makes an important contribution to their academic progress. They consider carefully how their actions affect others and are quick to help those who are lonely or upset. Even younger ones show a good awareness of the potential hazards of fire, busy roads and unsupervised use of the internet. Pupils of all ages enjoy taking responsibility and do it well. For example, the eco-warriors do much to make other pupils aware of the need to recycle waste and conserve natural resources. Pupils are proud of their local community and are often praised for their musical performances to nearby homes for the elderly and enthusiastic support for charities.

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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	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

In many lessons, teachers make learning fun by giving pupils plenty of practical activities and opportunities to discuss their work with their 'talking partner'. Teachers show a good knowledge of subjects and explain new work clearly. They make it clear what learning is expected by the end and revisit these goals throughout the lesson to ensure pupils know how well they are doing. In the very few lessons where progress in learning is satisfactory rather than good, teachers talk for too long and give pupils too little time to work independently at their own pace. This is particularly the case in writing. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to lessons, particularly by supporting lower attaining pupils and giving them confidence to answer questions.

The teachers make detailed assessment of pupils' progress and use these well to plan future work. They mark pupils' books diligently and provide helpful comments to help them improve.

The school has recently developed a curriculum that links subjects together in order to make learning more interesting. Pupils enjoy this approach and say how much it encourages them to do their own research at home. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in the topics, but expectations of written work are not always as high in other subjects as they are in English. The well planned personal, social and health education provision ensures that pupils gain a good awareness

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of health and safety issues and learn the importance of understanding other's feelings. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and help to make the themes come to life. For example, pupils visited a nearby space centre to enhance their work on the 'From Beyond' topic. There are, however, no visits to places of worship apart from the local Christian church.

Parents and carers are right to feel the school provides good care and support for their children. They appreciate the way staff know their children so well and are always there if any individual needs support. Care provision before and after school is managed well and provides a good range of safe and stimulating activities. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable benefit from sensitive support both from the school and from outside professionals and flourish as a result. The school has extensive systems to help new pupils settle in and they soon feel part of the school community.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 headteacher is a good leader and respected highly by all members of the school. She works successfully with other senior staff to tackle discrimination of any kind and provide equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve well. This explains why this is a happy school where all feel safe and valued. The headteacher has helped create a strong sense of teamwork among staff so that expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are consistently high. The good partnerships with parents and carers means they play an important part in their children's learning. The leaders analyse pupils' performance rigorously and use the school's development plan effectively to drive improvement and work towards ambitious targets. Leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and learning regularly and give teachers clear guidance on how to improve their work. Systems to safeguard and protect pupils are robust and staff benefit from good, regular training to ensure their knowledge is up to date. The school benefits from effective partnerships with other schools and local organisations that do much to enhance provision for English, mathematics, sport and music.

In order to promote community cohesion, the school has created strong links with the local community and with a contrasting school in the United Kingdom. However, there are few links with organisations farther afield to give pupils a thorough, first-hand awareness of how other people in the world live and worship. The governing body supports the school well. It plays an important role in evaluating the provision and is not afraid to hold the leaders to account.

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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	2
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

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children's skills and knowledge when they enter the nursery class are much lower than those typical of their ages. The consistently good teaching ensures children make good progress in all areas of learning. Nevertheless, their language and mathematical skills are below those typical of their ages by the time they leave the Reception class. Parents and carers say how much the comprehensive induction procedures help their children settle quickly into the Nursery. Children choose happily from the range of activities on offer, enjoying word building games as much as selling imaginary ice cream in the outdoor shop. The adults observe children's learning and development carefully and make detailed written and photographic records of their achievements. The curriculum is planned well so that the children have a good balance of activities they choose for themselves and those directed by the teacher. They enjoy many opportunities to use the excellent outside area to work and play.

Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Adults encourage them to think for themselves and they quickly become confident and independent learners. Children behave well although those in the Nursery sometimes find it hard to remember rules such as putting their hands up rather than calling out. The provision is led and managed well with a good awareness of how it can be improved. For example, the staff are currently working on using their assessments to provide even better links to the next steps in children's learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The number of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire is lower than is usual for a primary school this size. Their views are very positive. The vast majority appreciate the way their children enjoy school, feel safe and learn how to live healthy lives. They feel well-informed about their children's progress and always feel welcome in school. They believe the school is well led and that their children are making good progress. All of those who responded say that the teaching and learning are good. Inspectors agree with their views on these issues. A small minority feel that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour well but inspectors found no evidence of this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brierley Hill 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 197 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	70	11	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	84	6	16	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	57	16	43	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	62	14	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	65	13	35	0	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)	23	62	14	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	62	14	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	49	12	32	6	16	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	59	14	38	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	68	11	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	76	9	24	0	0	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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



14 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you work hard in lessons and play so happily outside. Those who were kind enough to speak with us showed how much you like school. You say yours is a good school and we agree.

You behave well, listen carefully to your teachers and make good progress. You have a good understanding of how to live a healthy life and know how to stay safe. We were impressed with the way you take responsibility so well and help those who are lonely or sad. The school provides an interesting range of activities for you and you enjoy the many clubs at lunchtime and after school. Your teachers make learning fun and are good at helping you when you find things difficult. All staff at the school take good care of you. Those in charge of your school do a good job and work very closely with your parents and carers to help you get the best out of your time here.

Your leaders are always looking for ways to improve the school. These are the improvements we want them to make.

Improve your writing and make sure you to write as well in all subjects as you do in English lessons. You can do your part by doing your very best writing in all subjects.

Give you more opportunities to learn about how other people in this country and across the world live and worship.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston

Lead inspector

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