

John Bamford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124171
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380823
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Bright
Headteacher	Louise Thomas Burns
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed 17 teachers and teaching assistants. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, parents and carers, and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to: attainment and the assessment of pupils' progress; school policies; the school's self-evaluation; minutes of governing body meetings; and the provision for safeguarding. They also looked at samples of pupils' work and the school development plan. They analysed 97 parental questionnaires and the responses from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do pupils achieve at a consistent rate of progress in key subjects as they move through the school?
- What measures have been used to bring about any improvements in tracking pupils' progress?
- What is the effectiveness of the actions taken by school leaders to improve provision and pupils' progress?

Information about the school

John Bamford Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are from predominantly White British heritage and the rest are mostly Indian, African and mixed race backgrounds. Although a very small minority speak English as an additional language, none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Few pupils join and leave the school other than at the normal times. The school provides a Nursery for children aged three years, prior to them transferring to the Reception class. Pupils are currently taught in mixed-age classes for Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4 and 5 and 6, but is changing in November 2011 to Years 5 and 6 being taught separately. There have been a number of staffing changes in the last two years, including the appointment of acting deputy headteacher in April 2011 and the appointment of the headteacher in September 2011, and three teachers are currently on family leave. The staffing situation is now stable. The school has recently gained a number of awards, including Activemark, the Artsmark Gold award and the National Healthy Schools status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

John Bamford Primary is a satisfactory school that provides a good standard of pastoral care. It is evident from the questionnaires completed by parents and carers, pupils and staff that almost all are proud to be part of the school. They recognise that it is a well-led and improving school. As one parent wrote, 'I am proud my child attends John Bamford. I feel my child is safe, happy and confident, due to the school's support and teaching.'

The school's inclusive and caring environment nurtures pupils' personal and social skills well, leading them to develop a secure sense of right and wrong. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They have well-rounded attitudes to living healthy lifestyles and behave well. Pupils enjoy much of what the school has to offer. They make a good contribution to the school and to the wider community. Pupils are successfully involved in sporting activities and enjoy singing in the Glee choir that has performed locally for senior citizens. They particularly valued the opportunity to participate in the local Harvest celebration in the parish church, where their involvement was appreciated by adults in the congregation. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and are keen to give their views on how the school could improve. The emphasis the curriculum places on enhancing pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in Britain today, the diversity that exists globally, and the opportunities available for pupils to learn alongside pupils in the local schools, help them to develop empathy and respect for others. Pupils understand that there are others who face extreme challenges in their lives and regularly raise money for a range of good causes.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Nonetheless, there is evidence that the development of systems to track how well pupils are doing, and actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning, are starting to have a positive impact on their attainment and progress. Last year, more than half of the pupils made better than expected progress and attainment in English and mathematics rose at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The tracking system is not fully embedded, however, so it is not as effective yet as it could be in accelerating pupils' progress. Teaching is satisfactory, although a proportion of good teaching was observed across the school during the inspection. There are important strengths in teaching but good practice is not shared widely in efforts to raise standards. Partly as a result, teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that learning and progress are steady throughout the school. Sometimes, in teachers' bid to make activities interesting and

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relevant, the focus on what pupils are meant to learn gets lost and the task itself is given too much importance. Questioning is not always used well enough to challenge pupils to recall and apply what they have learnt or to help them understand whether they have been successful. Data from the most recent assessments are used well to organise pupils into groups for literacy, mathematics and science lessons. However, planning still does not always pay sufficient attention to the range of abilities that exist within the groups and some pupils are not challenged sufficiently.

The senior leaders are ambitious for the school and determined that pupils will reach their potential. New systems of monitoring and honest self-evaluation mean that leaders have an accurate picture of what the school is doing well and a clear plan is in place to tackle the improvements that are needed in the future. The improvements to date demonstrate that the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good teaching in reading, writing and mathematics so that most pupils make good progress by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - match activities closely to the learning needs of pupils of all abilities
 - keep lessons focused on what pupils are meant to learn rather than the activity they are doing
 - use questioning to encourage pupils to recall and apply their learning, and to help them understand what they are doing well and how they could improve.
- Implement plans to ensure that at least 80% of pupils achieve nationally expected levels or above in writing and mathematics by:
 - sharing existing good practice amongst the staff
 - fully embedding the assessment and tracking of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most children start school with skills below those expected for their age and often with very limited language. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning because they respond well to teachers' own enthusiasm in lessons and the good relationships they develop with their classes. Pupils are generally interested in what they are doing, listen attentively during whole-class sessions, get on with the tasks set for them and behave well. Overall, evidence from lessons seen during the inspection, monitoring

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since the start of term and current data show that the progress pupils make is improving and, over the last year, over half the pupils in Year 6 made good progress. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, and those from minority ethnic groups, reach or exceed the expected level for their age is steadily improving. This is because the school provides extra support for these pupils that is effective in helping them to learn. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because rigorous tracking identifies them early, so that they get the additional support they need in good time.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 has fluctuated over the last three years and last year was broadly average. Acceleration in learning in Year 6 improved test results in English and mathematics, and closed the gap between the school’s performance and that nationally. However, the pattern has not been one of steady increases over time. The school’s current evidence and observations of pupils at work during the inspection show that attainment is below that expected for their age for a proportion of the current Year 6 pupils. The school is confident that it can accelerate progress, through the use of extra support and enhancement sessions, and raise standards by the end of the school year.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers succeed in making learning interesting. They use information and communication technology well to support their whole-class teaching. This was seen when Year 5 and 6 pupils wrote new words from their science practical lessons on

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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the whiteboard, and when Year 1 and 2 pupils sounded out the letters displayed that the 'Phonics Fairy' pointed to. Techniques such as paired talk are used to actively involve all pupils in lessons. Over the last term, the school has focused on developing pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and what the next steps are in their learning. In lessons, teachers tell pupils what they will be learning and emphasise links with previous lessons.

Pupils are taught specific skills, supported by visits to appropriate venues, which they then have to apply in extended writing sessions. This has had a positive impact on narrowing the gap between reading and writing across the school, and improving the number of pupils who are on track to achieve the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and make meaningful links between subjects. It is too early to see the impact of recent improvements on attainment across the full age range, but feedback from pupils and staff show it is boosting pupils' enjoyment.

The school provides good support to pupils who may be vulnerable, due to their specific circumstances and who encounter particular challenges which can be barriers to their learning and well-being. Staff identify pupils who are falling behind their targets and put in timely additional support. The school effectively matches additional support and care to their needs, for example by using one-to-one tuition or links with professional agencies, to get them back on track. Good care and support were observed at the Forest School session, where greater independence and self-esteem is encouraged. This establishes good preparedness for pupils' subsequent learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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 headteacher has brought energy, enthusiasm and high expectations of staff and pupils. She works effectively with her strong senior team and has raised the profile of newly-appointed subject leaders. In particular, she is rigorously tackling some previous weaknesses in teaching to ensure that it is consistently at least satisfactory. Staff are fully consulted over plans for improvement, for example the forthcoming change to single-aged classes in Years 5 and 6, so that they are clear about what leaders and managers are trying to achieve. Professional development, focused on key priorities and performance management, ensures that staff across the school know exactly what their role is within the team. As one teacher commented: 'The

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staff are motivated to accept nothing but the best. Staff morale is high and I feel we are in the best position for taking the school forward.' A thread through all aspects of the school's work is its commitment to equality. It considers carefully how well different groups of pupils are doing and knows which may need additional support. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Programmes, such as 'Around the World in 80 Days', celebrate the rich diversity within the local community and beyond. This explains why the pupils develop some understanding of other's backgrounds, but the school is not effectively monitoring and evaluating its impact on this aspect of the development of all pupils. The school seeks the views of parents and carers to make sure it understands their particular needs. For example, in response to feedback, it has provided workshops on a range of curriculum areas, and, for the parents and carers of the younger children, opportunities to hear the morning reading time. This is enabling more parents and carers to better understand how they can support their children's learning.

Governance is satisfactory and the recently appointed members of the governing body demonstrate a passion for improvement. The governing body is recruiting widely to bring it up to full strength and its members bring the right mix of skills and experience. There is a growing core of governors who are developing their skills to ensure they are able to provide an increased level of support and challenge for senior leaders.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and are reviewed regularly. There are clear procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils, backed up by regular training for staff. Pupils feel they are safe in school, as do their parents and carers, and know that their views are taken into account. They appreciate that the school has good procedures to help them to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, it offers road safety sessions conducted by the local street warden, who also accompanied the older pupils to the local police station where officers gave further guidance on safeguarding themselves from drug and alcohol abuse.

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most start with skills below those expected for their age and often with very limited language. Over the time they are in the Nursery and Reception Years, children make satisfactory progress, and their skills are below average in reading and writing when they move to Year 1. Staff are led by an enthusiastic leader, the impact of whose direction and support is developing as she acquires the skills of analysing the data on children’s progress. Staff training is closely linked to ensuring the well-being of the children and improving the quality of learning and development. For example, staff have had specific training on how to develop minority ethnic children’s talking and reading skills, and how to achieve a balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. All of these newly acquired skills are being implemented, but it is too soon for the impact of this to be evident in children’s consistent outcomes in literacy and personal development.

Staff work very hard to include and involve all children and their families. Closer links with new families are leading to a better understanding of how parents and carers can support their children as they start school. Parents and carers are made to feel welcome when they arrive and are encouraged to stay, particularly in a child’s first days. As a result, children are settled and happy. Daily routines help the children to feel secure. They form good relationships with the adults who support them, particularly their key worker. They learn to keep themselves safe and healthy from an early age, and begin to develop an awareness of the needs and feelings of others. Activities are planned to meet individual needs, taking into account children’s interests and preferences based on observations of them at play and listening to what they and their parents and carers say. The location of classes gives children in the Nursery and Reception easy access to their outside areas. Children particularly enjoy the opportunities they have to learn and play in the large playgrounds that have many wheeled toys and large plastic jigsaw shapes that promote their handling skills.

Staff are well qualified and have a good understanding of children’s development. They are developing ways to keep parents and carers fully informed with daily records of their children’s day. Throughout the day, children are offered stimulating play opportunities across all areas of learning both in the bright, airy inside area and in the well-fenced outdoor area. There is a strong focus on children’s well-being and ensuring a safe environment for their learning and development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

3

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Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a low response by parents and carers to the questionnaire. The very large majority who returned the questionnaire said that overall they were happy with their children's experience at John Bamford Primary. Parents and carers confirm that their children enjoy school, that their children are safe and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. Most parents and carers believed that teaching is good and that their child is making sufficient progress. The inspection found that these aspects are improving but are not yet consistently good. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that behaviour is not managed effectively. Inspectors found that behaviour is good, both in and outside the classroom, as a result of staff's good care and guidance. A similar small proportion of parents and carers felt that the school does not take notice of parental suggestions and concerns, and felt that the school is not led and managed well. The inspection found that the school is communicating regularly with parents and carers, especially through the weekly newsletter, to set up a dialogue to share the new leaderships' vision for school improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at John Bamford 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 352 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	66	32	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	71	26	27	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	59	61	34	35	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	61	31	32	6	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	58	60	35	36	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	54	55	39	40	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	58	38	39	2	2	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)	54	56	38	39	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	58	60	33	34	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	55	31	32	7	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	55	3	34	9	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	49	35	36	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	63	65	27	28	4	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



20 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Bamford Primary School, Rugeley, WS15 2PA

It was lovely to meet you when we came to your school. I particularly enjoyed hearing you sing so beautifully in assembly. Thank you very much to all of you who spoke to us in lessons, around the school and in the special meetings we had. We know that your school takes your views seriously and so do we. We have judged that your school is satisfactory. It is definitely improving and some things it does are good. These are some of the things that we found.

- The headteacher and the other staff lead the school well. They know what it does well and what could be better.
- All the adults in the school work hard to care for you and make sure that you are safe.
- The youngest children get off to a satisfactory start.
- You enjoy learning and work hard because lessons are interesting.
- You behave well in class and around school.

Your headteacher and her staff are determined to make John Bamford Primary a better school and to make sure you achieve as well as you can. We discussed with them the most important things they need to do and we have said that they should:

- improve the proportion of good teaching so that most of you make good progress
- make sure that most of you reach the nationally expected level for your age in writing and mathematics.

You can help by always doing your best and attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford
Lead inspector

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