

Brownlow Fold Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105149
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377185
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Vanessa MacDonald

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Wood
Headteacher	Janet Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2007
School address	Darley Street Bolton BL1 3DX
Telephone number	01204 333511
Fax number	01204 333512
Email address	office@brownlow-fold.bolton.sch.uk
Registered childcare provision	Brownlow Fold Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	68
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	14 February 2007

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons or part lessons and observed 11 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation that included the school development plan, data relating to pupils' progress and attainment, safeguarding policies, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching and learning and reports written by the School Improvement Partner. The inspectors also analysed 78 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- How well the school ensures that all pupils, particularly those of different ethnic groups, achieve their full potential.
- How effectively the school ensures teaching is challenging the more-able pupils at both key stages.
- How effective leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are in accurately evaluating strengths and weaknesses

Information about the school

Brownlow Fold is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and many are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. There are 13 languages used within the schools and the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above national average. A below-average proportion of pupils are of a White British heritage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average. The school has gained Leading Parent Partnership Award, Inclusion Quality Mark, Healthy School status, Active Schools Award, Eco Silver Award and Intermediate International Schools Award. The school has a breakfast club and a large Nursery which includes provision for children under three, which are managed by the school's 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. The senior leaders, managers and governors provide good direction for the school with a determined focus by all on continued improvement. Leadership responsibilities are distributed effectively and team-work is strong; this results in a united, determined and clear vision about what can be achieved. High expectations are set and rigorous self-evaluation is accurate, leading to secure plans for improvement which are sharply focused on raising achievement. The areas for development raised at the last inspection have been regularly monitored and reviewed with on-going improvements to practice which are having a positive impact on outcomes. This is reflected in examples of outstanding personal development and improving attainment which demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The outstanding provision and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including that for the under threes, ensures that children make an excellent start to their education from their attainment on entry, which is overall well below those expected for their age. Learning and progress, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are good and improving. There are a few examples of outstanding progress. Pupils reach average and improving levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. This is due to good teaching, some of which is outstanding. Teaching is engaging and provides opportunities for pupils to use and apply their basic skills in different subjects and real life contexts. However, occasionally the pace in lessons slows and opportunities to challenge pupils further, particularly the more able, and maintaining their active engagement are not fully exploited. Use of assessment strategies to support learning are in place, although these are not always consistently applied across subjects and classes to ensure all pupils understand clearly what the next steps in their learning are. The good curriculum has a clear focus on developing pupils' skills, particularly language skills, across all subjects. The importance of first-hand experiences is strongly embedded, including a residential visit and a joint visit to France with another school. A range of extra-curricular activities, such as gardening, cricket and choir, is offered to pupils and promotes their personal development well.

Attendance is now high as a consequence of the very effective strategies which the school has employed, including through its outstanding engagement with parents and carers. Pupils say they feel extremely safe and their contribution to the school and wider community is excellent. Care, guidance and support and safeguarding are

also exemplary, reflecting the high levels of commitment and skill among the staff in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further by:
 - ensuring that the pace in all lessons is effective in enabling pupils to be actively engaged in their learning throughout
 - increasing the consistency of challenge for all pupils, including the more-able
 - improving the use of assessment especially in marking and feedback to ensure that the next steps to learning are clear.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good and improving and they enjoy school. In all lessons learning is good and pupils are engaged effectively with their activities. Pupils acquire knowledge, develop a good understanding and learn and practise their skills successfully in other subjects. They work at a brisk pace when tasks are challenging and especially when pupils are given real life contexts in which to work. In an outstanding Key Stage 2 lesson, for example, pupils were invited to be customers and waiters. They applied their skills very effectively to solve number problems and were challenged to continually check and develop their understanding. Occasionally, pace is not fast enough or tasks fail to be sufficiently challenging, including for those who are more able, and this slows progress. Nevertheless, the overall progress of pupils is good. Frequent review of pupils' progress is checking that all make the expected progress with subsequent increase in pupils attaining age related expectations and above by Year 6. There are no significant differences between different ethnic groups and the school welcomes pupils from other countries who speak English as an additional language. These pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported by teaching assistants and other agencies. Specifically tailored intervention programmes are carefully followed and lead to good progress, particularly in the areas of language and communication.

Behaviour is good and systems to manage it are embedded very well across the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive, ensuring lessons are productive. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the daily running of the school through the active school council, as play leaders, librarians and as prefects in the older classes. They have a very good knowledge about issues affecting their local and the wider global community and are keen to make a difference through, for example, raising money to help victims of natural disasters and litter picking to improve their environment. Pupils are respectful of others beliefs which is also reflected in the warm, friendly and cooperative atmosphere within the school where learning is highly valued. Pupils' well-developed social skills, good use of their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across

different subjects, improving attainment and high attendance ensure good preparation for the future.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is at its best work is matched very closely to pupils' individual needs, ensuring consistent active engagement, challenge at all levels and good pace throughout the lesson. In other lessons there are times when pupils are not always active participants in the lesson and challenge is insufficient to ensure best possible progress. In all lessons the warmth of the relationships contributes strongly to the positive and purposeful learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to involve and engage pupils and the use of laptops further enhances and consolidates their learning. Teaching assistants are integral to and highly effective in supporting pupils' learning. Assessment and tracking systems are rigorous and give teachers a good understanding of pupils' progress and achievement. Targets for improvement are consistently applied across school and pupils talk about these although the application of these in improving work is variable. Marking, through a whole school approach, is regularly done but is better in some subjects than others at helping pupils understand how to improve their work. The use of marking and feedback in lessons is not consistently focused and applied to ensure pupils are clearer about their next steps in learning.

The curriculum provides memorable experiences and rich opportunities for good quality learning, which enable pupils to have a wide range of first-hand amazing experiences. It is not surprising that pupils refer to them as 'wow' activities. There are highly tailored programmes for a wide range of groups of pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, with specific strategies employed to ensure accelerated acquisition and development of language skills. The use of themes and topics is embedded, with good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in different subjects. Pupils are involved in shaping their learning through asking questions at the beginning of topics. The more recent

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

introduction of basic skills sessions further support pupils although these are not yet fully embedded.

The school’s commitment to the care of its pupils is reflected in how much pupils enjoy school, feel safe and develop both personally and academically. Carefully targeted support is based on rigorous analysis and rapid identification of need. This enables many to overcome barriers to their learning and become better able to make good progress. Work with other agencies is integral to the support given to pupils and families with a range of different needs. Newcomers are welcomed and thrive in this caring school. There are very effective transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school, outstanding home-school links with parents and carers of children in the Nursery, including the under threes and Reception children, and well managed transition to Year 1. The school has undertaken a wide range of strategies to promote attendance which has had a substantial impact on persistent absentees and overall attendance. The breakfast club provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their social skills through interacting with both adults and pupils of different ages, as well as providing them with a range of healthy breakfast choices.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other leaders have a clear vision for the school which is sharply focused on improving the outcomes for the pupils in its care. They are successful in sharing this vision and, as a result, morale is high and belief in the school’s success permeates at all levels. Self-evaluation and monitoring practices are well developed and rigorous and contribute to very well-focused plans for driving further improvement. Areas to develop in teaching have been identified and actions are starting to have an impact on resolving them and ensuring that all teaching is good or better. Success can be seen in the new strategies now in place which have narrowed the gap between boys and girls in writing and raised attainment. Leaders and managers at all levels are fully involved in the monitoring and review of their subjects. Continued professional development is a priority, of a high quality and has a positive impact on outcomes. The promotion of equal opportunities is good with any differences between groups of pupils narrowing and no evidence of discrimination.

The work of the school is well supported by the effective governing body, who are continually developing their knowledge and skills. Members of the governing body are involved in the school’s self-evaluation and play a full part in its daily life, each governor having specific links to classes. Governors have been proactive in setting up a local governors cluster and forming a parents forum through which they gather parents’ views. Governors are well-informed and are beginning to ask more

challenging questions of the school's leaders and managers to ensure that the school continues to improve the outcomes for its pupils.

The school has very positive relationships with parents and carers through Stay and Share sessions in Year 1 and discussion of learning journeys in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example. The school communicates very well with parents and carers through regular newsletters and parents' evenings and has received the Leading Parent Partnership award for its strong links. Partnership work provides pupils with opportunities to experience the wider world through, for example, the Bolton Magistrates higher aspirations programme. Links with a cluster of schools helps to develop and promote good practice in a range of areas, with Brownlow Fold taking a lead in ICT. The school has strong links with a range of different partnerships to support pupils' learning and well-being. The caring and positive attitudes which the pupils show create a cohesive school community and links with other schools locally promote good community cohesion. The school is developing a wider range of opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge of the diversity of national and global communities. Safeguarding practices are of a high quality with procedures which are extremely thorough, robust and constantly updated.

These are the grades for the 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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's starting points are well below expectations for their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills. They make outstanding progress by the end of Reception. Children, including the under threes, are happy and settled in the bright stimulating environment which encourages them to be active, creative, independent and confident learners. Activities for the under threes are carefully selected for them and they respond well to these. The provision for these children complies with the requirements for registration. Relationships and behaviour are excellent throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and children have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. There is an excellent balance of adult and child-led learning with clear evidence of providing opportunities for children to learn through following their own interests. For instance, their imaginative development flourishes as a result of well developed role-play areas such

as Superheroes which really grasps the attention of the children, particularly boys, as they explore and write about them.

The curriculum is rich and imaginative and key workers constantly monitor and assess the progress in children’s learning. Teaching is outstanding because planning is based around children’s interests and focused on activities that provoke curiosity in learning, challenging children to solve problems. Staff act as excellent role models in role play, dressing up as witches and going on a bear hunt, for example, and promoting rapid language development, securing very strong foundations for future learning. Adults effectively facilitate next steps in learning through comprehensive record keeping and observations. Links with parents and carers are excellent and there are many opportunities for them to actively engage as partners in their children’s learning. Induction and transition procedures are excellent ensuring children settle and move with ease from Nursery to Reception.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the under threes, is outstanding with all staff having extremely high expectations. There is a very strong sense of commitment and energy which is shared by all. Tracking and monitoring are rigorous, informed by children’s responses and parents’ and carers’ feedback, so that planning for further improvements to provision is based on secure evidence and clear targets.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire have very positive views and all are happy with their children’s experiences of school. There are commendations for the good quality of teaching, the high standard of care and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Inspection findings endorse these views. Processes are in place to enable parents to have a voice and raise concerns or suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brownlow Fold 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 274 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	65	27	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	71	23	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	56	32	41	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	60	31	40	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	68	25	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	58	32	41	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	59	30	38	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)	40	51	36	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	58	32	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	56	31	40	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	50	34	44	3	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	62	29	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	74	20	26	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	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 is 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.



10 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brownlow Fold Primary School, Bolton, BL1 3DX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspectors when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it.

Brownlow Fold is a good school and some of its work is outstanding. You get an excellent start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and make outstanding progress. Throughout the school, all the adults who work with you know you very well and the school takes outstanding care of you. Links with your parents and carers are very close. Staff are doing a good job and make sure that effective teaching helps you to make good progress. You say you feel very safe in school and your involvement in school life and your attendance are excellent. Well done! Part of our job is to see what your school could do better. We have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to do this by:

- making sure that all the work planned is really challenging, makes you think and keeps you involved, to help you make even better progress
- making sure that the marking and feedback you get in all lessons helps you know clearly how to improve your work.

You can all help by telling your teachers if you have any problems.

Thank you again for making our visit such a lovely experience.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa MacDonald
Lead inspector

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