



Pownall Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106089
LEA Stockport
Inspection number 277483
Inspection dates 3 October 2005 to 4 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Jon Lovgreen CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bramhall Lane South Bramhall Stockport, Cheshire SK7 2EB
School category	Community	Telephone number	0161 4391105
Age range of pupils	4 to 11	Fax number	0161 4395472
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr D Jackson
Number on roll	450	Headteacher	Mrs D Ashcroft
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2000		

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 October 2005 - 4 October 2005	Inspection number 277483
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Pownall Green Primary School is a large school serving the village of Bramhall. The area has little social or economic deprivation. Few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The majority of pupils come from a white British background; the proportion with a home language other than English is smaller than that found nationally. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is half that typically found and the majority come from outside the catchment area. Pupil mobility is low. A Beacon school for six years, the school has also gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Sport England Gold Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is a highly effective school, as reflected by its own detailed and rigorous analysis which came to the same conclusion. Despite having only a limited agenda for improvement from the previous inspection report, the school has been unceasing in its desire and drive for improvement. Standards have risen; they are now high and achievement is excellent. Children flourish because they realise that they are known and cherished. They enjoy and rise to the challenge of stimulating lessons. The consistency and vibrancy of teaching across year groups and subject areas is a major strength, as is the strong desire of teachers and children to do better. Systems for assessing children's work and their progress are very thorough for English, mathematics and science, but are less well developed in other subjects. Children are offered a wide and rich range of things to do, both in lesson time and beyond. Highly effective links with a range of other agencies and organisations further promote the well-being of learners. The school provides exceptionally well for its youngest children in the Foundation Stage so that they quickly become happy and effective learners with a very good sense of the value of getting along with others. The school has established a philosophy of balancing challenge and ambition for success with a high degree of care and sensitivity. This flows through all aspects of school life and thinking, and stems from an inspirational headteacher who is most ably supported by other school leaders and an alert and involved governing body. Complacency is unheard of, and the school retains the desire and the capacity to improve. It gives excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

To improve further the school should:

- sharpen even more the ways in which standards are evaluated in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science so that the school can confirm its own judgements about achievement and pupils know how well they are progressing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's achievement is first-rate. Most enter the reception year at a level above that typical for their age. Notwithstanding, they make rapid progress and many well exceed the goals for their learning by the end of the year. Children's progress continues to flourish and by the end of Year 2 attainment is significantly above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Further progress is pursued relentlessly in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, children's attainment is exceptionally high and their achievement is outstanding. Any relative weaknesses are amended from year to year. For example, in 2004 the proportion of children reaching the higher level in mathematics was slightly lower than it could have been. By 2005, that had been remedied and progress overall in that year was very rapid. Standards are high across the board. For example, children are very competent in music and information and communication technology (ICT),

displaying skills and understanding beyond their years. The school's profound belief in a broad canvas of achievement, the children's fiery enthusiasm, and the quality teaching they receive all conspire to ensure swift progress towards the high standards displayed. This applies to all children, irrespective of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, level of attainment, gifts or talents.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

'This is a great school.' This quote from a child sums up the views of others perfectly. Children love coming to school and enjoy almost everything about it - 'the teachers, the lessons, music, art, using computers, and playtimes.' They feel valued and respected, resulting in high confidence and self-esteem. Relationships at all levels are exemplary, with spontaneous acts of kindness towards others being the norm. Social and moral awareness are strong. Children appreciate what they have, and show consideration towards others less fortunate. After hearing about street children in Goa in an assembly, some children were so moved that they donated their birthday money and savings towards charity. Children make an outstanding contribution to their own community in a wide variety of ways, both formally, such as through the school council and older children acting as monitors and receptionists, and informally through their very good attitudes and actions. They know how to keep healthy and safe and they feel well cared for. They behave very well and have highly developed social skills. Attendance is high. The exemplary personal development of children and their extremely positive experiences make a significant contribution to their current success, as well as equipping them very well for their future learning. The school has worked effectively to give a greater focus to helping children understand the spiritual dimension of life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children learn widely, very well, and at a brisk pace because of the consistently high quality of teaching they receive. Teachers are ambitious for children to improve, and work tirelessly to prepare imaginative yet well-structured lessons. Children always understand and appreciate the task in hand, and they enthuse about the many lessons where they are encouraged to explore and think beyond the obvious. The books which children make for themselves in each year to showcase their talents are a superb example of this enterprise.

The support which teachers and children give each other is outstanding. Boredom is not an option. Both are highly committed to getting the best from lessons so that classrooms have an atmosphere of joy and purpose. In one ICT lesson, children were on the edge of their seats with anticipation, but also showed very good skills in using e-mails and Internet searches. Teachers are highly self-critical, constantly looking for

ways to make lessons better and to learn from each other. They are very receptive to pupils' ideas and insights into what makes the best lessons.

Teachers are highly skilled at asking probing questions, and they model technical vocabulary in exemplary fashion. This helped Year 3 children to quickly gain the notion of a fair test in science, and learn how to look at trends to draw out further questions and conclusions. Very regular and thorough marking encourages children to be proud of what they have achieved, and to strive to do even better. In some areas, precise guidance to children about how to improve particular skills is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

There is an outstanding range of things for children to do, which enhances their enjoyment and achievement. The curriculum, which fully meets statutory requirements, is skilfully designed with children's needs and interests in mind. Relevant connections between subjects are exploited fully, from the Foundation Stage to Year 6, in a way that brings learning to life. For example, the superb video clips made in Year 4 reveal children's knowledge of insects, and link learning in ICT, science, reading and writing. Children enjoy learning so much that in Year 6 they can talk fluently about subjects 'being a window on the world'. Basic skills and children's personal development are planned for exceptionally well. Moreover, music, ICT, art and physical education are excellent in their impact on children's development. The promotion of health and safety is excellent, as is the introduction of children to the world of work. There is a vast array of engaging activities outside of lessons, and opportunities for character building residential trips.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's commitment to children is of the highest order and is reflected in the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for them. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are rigorous. Children are very well known and respected as individuals. Teachers have detailed knowledge about their specific needs and meet them very well. The additional needs which some children, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are extremely well catered for. In such cases, the school works in effective partnership with parents, and with outside agencies when necessary. An excellent feature is the high degree of care that older children show towards younger ones. The maturity and sensitivity with which Year 6 children act as 'playground friends' and 'leaders' with infant children is stunning. They help develop good relationships, solve problems and develop their social and physical skills. Within this safe, secure and supportive environment, children thrive and are enabled to make outstanding progress in their personal and academic learning. They have a very clear idea of their standards in English, mathematics and science; in other subjects they can be a little less sure about their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are of the highest quality. The result is that everyone in the school community feels valued and trusted, and accepts a part in school improvement. This is, as one teacher summarised, a 'happy, buzzing place to learn'.

The headteacher is indefatigable and unflinching in her quest to give children an ever-better, more rounded education. This has created a climate where the focal concern is the well-being and development of children as both learners and people. This permeates the school so that there is constant thought and questioning leading to high quality and wide-ranging evaluation of what makes success and where refinements could be made. The very clear and comprehensive assessment systems in English, mathematics and science are very effective. However, the school as a whole, and children as individuals, are less sure about standards in other subjects.

The school's well-planned distributed leadership system has enabled subject leaders to thrive on their increased role in leading, checking and changing what goes on. The views of parents and children are sought and respected. The school is healthily receptive to new ideas and criticism, whilst strongly retaining its principles and beliefs. This gives it a very good capacity to improve even further.

The governing body is highly active and involved, appreciating the quality of information it gets. It is both supportive and influential, and fully aware of its responsibilities, and the opportunities these bring. The school gives excellent value for money and uses its budget imaginatively yet thoughtfully.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, a team of school inspectors recently visited your school to see if it is giving you the education you should receive. Firstly, we would like to thank you for the warm and courteous welcome you gave us. We enjoyed hearing your views, watching you at work, and finding out what you like doing.

You will be delighted to hear that we decided that you have an excellent school. The things which we felt were outstanding are:

- the excellent way in which your headteacher has organised the school
- lively and fascinating lessons, which really make you think
- the ways in which you care about and try to help each other
- the pleasure which everyone shows in being at school
- the wonderful range of things for you to do both in lessons and beyond.

We are asked to suggest where things could be done better. Yours is such a good school that we only have one area. We have asked your teachers to make things even better by:

- giving you a clearer idea about how well you are doing in subjects other than English, mathematics and science by sharing with you what skills you need to learn in them, and explaining what progress each of you is making.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of the school. We hope that you will continue to enjoy your school life, and that you will play your part in helping teachers to make the school even better. Our best wishes for the future.