



John Bamford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124171
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281650
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Christine Field RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crabtree Way
School category	Community		Etching Hill
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Rugeley, Staffordshire WS15 2PA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01889 256160
Number on roll	362	Fax number	01889 256164
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Steve Elcock
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Laurie Wood

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

John Bamford is a large primary school serving the local and wider community of Rugeley. When children start in the nursery their attainment is typically average but spans a very wide range. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a few have a different heritage. No pupils are learning English as a new language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average and two pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education, with positive aspects that support pupils' good personal development. Pupils are very well looked after and they receive many opportunities that assist their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has forged strong links with its community that enrich pupils' learning experiences. Steady progress has been made since the previous inspection and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with good features that help pupils enjoy learning and build good self-confidence. Children in the nursery and reception classes are well taught and make good progress. Good use of the information gained from on-going assessment helps the staff to plan work that assists all of the children in moving forward. Pupils with learning difficulties make consistently good progress because of the effective support they receive to help them reach precise individual learning targets. Higher-attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily overall but they make faster progress in some years than others. This means that their academic achievement, though satisfactory, should be better. Teachers' use of assessment to help track these pupils' progress is not rigorous enough. Additionally, there are not enough opportunities provided for pupils to review their personal achievements.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation, however, is over-optimistic and inspectors disagree with its view of good effectiveness. The school has made good use of data to identify where the relative strengths and weaknesses lie in its performance in national tests. For example, initiatives introduced to raise standards in writing are now having a positive impact. However, the procedures in place to monitor the school's overall effectiveness are not sharp enough to pinpoint the variations in pupils' progress year-on-year and do not involve enough senior staff in evaluating teaching and learning. Nevertheless, there is a clear sense of direction in the school and a strong sense of team spirit, with everyone working together to make the school more effective. Parents and governors are proud of their school and play a useful part in its development. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations so that throughout the school higher-attaining pupils make consistently good progress.
- Ensure that target setting better supports pupils' next steps in learning and involves them in reviewing their progress.
- Sharpen the monitoring focus to identify precisely how well pupils are learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the nursery and reception classes broadly working at the expected level. Most progress effectively to reach the targets set for them when they transfer to Year 1. Pupils mainly make satisfactory progress from Years 1 to 6. Those with learning

difficulties make better progress because good use is made of assessment information to set work that is well matched to their different stages of learning.

The school's results in 2005 showed that both standards and progress were broadly average. The school's analysis of the results indicated a few more able pupils did not reach the higher levels expected in reading in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6. In response the school is implementing a range of strategies geared towards helping higher attainers do better. For example, higher-attaining mathematicians in Years 5 and 6 are being taught as a separate group and this is helping them to make accelerated progress. An emphasis on regular reading practice is helping pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop their skills confidently. The school has worked effectively to raise standards in writing in all years and the outcomes are positive, as reflected in the good quality of writing in pupils' books and on display.

The school has not always set challenging enough targets for the pupils. This has particularly affected the higher attainers. Since September, revised and more challenging targets have been set for pupils in Year 6, and the procedures to check that they are well on course to meet their targets have been revamped appropriately. It is early days but the signs of improvement are promising. The next step planned is to widen the use of accurate target setting to help quicken progress in all years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very proud of their school, enjoy being there and attend well. One pupil summed this up by saying: 'I like this school because the teachers are fun and it is a good place to be.' Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour in and around the school is good. They show consideration for each other and older pupils are always keen to help and support younger ones. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In fund-raising activities on behalf of local and national charities, pupils gain an awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. For example, during Harvest Festival pupils raised money to buy trees, goats, a cow and materials to help build a health centre for a village in Africa.

Pupils are very aware of how to keep safe and healthy. They know what a healthy diet consists of, and why they need physical activity. A good number enjoy the nutritious school meals and are keen to make sure they have five fresh vegetables or fruit a day. The 'walk to school' events are viewed very positively and the take-up is good. Pupils' involvement in sporting and music activities helps build cooperation and teamwork, as do the many residential visits pupils experience during their time at school. The very good attention paid to developing pupils' self-confidence and independence is helping to prepare them for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall with strengths that result in happy, settled classes where pupils clearly enjoy learning. In nursery and reception the quality is good. Here, lessons are well planned to meet all the children's needs and staff use a good blend of adult-led and child-chosen activities. The children in nursery and reception enjoy their learning and they are keen to find out about the many new things they meet.

However, the school recognises that improvement can be made to teaching. At present there is room for improvement in lesson planning in Year 1 to 6, to help quicken progress by ensuring that the skills and knowledge to be learned by all attainment groups are identified precisely. In some learning the pace is too leisurely, and the pupils, especially the higher attainers, are not always set challenging enough work. They sometimes bide time because the harder work prepared for them is not started until quite late in the lesson. In a number of cases, the work for higher attainers is exactly the same as for others. Teachers' use of assessment to help track these pupils' progress is not rigorous enough. The use of individual targets to help pupils' focus their next steps in learning is inconsistent and there are not enough opportunities for them to comment on their own work.

In many parts of the school, but especially for pupils in Years 3 to 6, the open-plan design of the buildings means that noise is transferred from class to class. In a Year 3/4 literacy session, for example, the concentration of a few boys was affected by the activity and noise next door. This reduced the rate of their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for most pupils but there is insufficient focus on fully meeting the needs and aptitudes of the highest attainers, including those with gifts and talents. In nursery and reception the children work from a good programme that places a firm focus on their personal and social development and the building of skills in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties.

A wide range of extra activities is provided for the pupils to enjoy. For example, pupils are particularly keen to take part in residential visits to Chasewater and Coven. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 to 6 were fired up by the visit of a science theatre group who explored the world of water in an animated and highly amusing way.

The school has earned the 'Artsmark' silver award in recognition of the strength of its curriculum for the arts. The school uses ICT effectively to build pupils' skills and knowledge across the curriculum. Display around the school is of high quality and classrooms are bright and stimulating. The transfer of noise from one class to another is intrusive, however, and requires closer monitoring.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Good attention is paid to safeguarding pupils, with effective systems in place to assess risks and ensure health and safety. Pupils feel safe in school and told inspectors that this is due to the very good relationships enjoyed with one another and staff. The use of 'nurture groups' to enable pupils from different classes to come together to share views and air mutual concerns is developing well. Parents identify the safe and supportive learning environment that the school successfully provides as a key strength. Very good links have been forged with a range of social, medical and support agencies that are effective in helping pupils and their families. For example, the nurse offers regular 'drop-in' sessions for anyone needing a chat. Very good attention is paid to child protection matters. Well thought through transition arrangements with secondary schools ensure a seamless and smooth transfer of Year 6 pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall quality of leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher give an effective steer to improvement in both the pastoral and academic work of the school. They have been particularly successful in promoting good quality care for all pupils. There is a strong sense of purpose amongst staff and they share the same values and aims for the school. There is a clear direction given by the leadership team, with positive impact showing from initiatives introduced to raise standards, for example, in writing. The school knows where the relative strengths and weaknesses lie; however, its self-evaluation of overall effectiveness was more positive than the inspection findings. This is largely because some of the systems in place to monitor the quality of education lack precision. For example, the school recognises that further work is required in observing teaching and learning and involving more staff in the process. Team leaders manage their phases well but do not have sufficient or rigorous enough role in the process of checking that all pupils make consistently good progress year on year.

Governors are involved and supportive, and are becoming more alert to the successes and areas for improvement in school. They ensure that legal requirements are met and that resources are allocated efficiently to achieve value for money. The school has good capacity to move forward.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

John Bamford Primary School Crabtree Way Etching Hill Rugeley Staff WS15 2PA

9 December 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you for welcoming us into your school earlier this week. We enjoyed our time with you and found our chats with you interesting. You told us that you really like school and that your teachers look after you well. We agree with these things and have found other good things in school.

- Your behaviour is good; you get on well with each other and play together happily.
- You are eager to learn, willing to try out new things and you work hard.
- You are keen to join the residential visits that help you build your team-work and leadership skills successfully.
- You know all about keeping healthy and many of you enjoy the great school meals provided.
- Those of you in the nursery and reception settle quickly, develop good self-confidence and take full advantage of the exciting activities provided.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to make improvements in the following things to help you learn better.

- To make sure that the work all of you are set is not too easy and just right to help you move on quickly.
- Set clear targets to show you how well you are doing but also to identify how you can do even better.
- Check on your progress more often to make sure that you are learning as much as you can.

Good luck with your studies.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Ann Field Lead inspector