



Brookfields Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103175
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286584
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	2 Hingeston Street
School category	Community		Hockley
Age range of pupils	3–11		Birmingham B18 6PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5541897
Number on roll (school)	198	Fax number	0121 5070143
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Michael Bates
		Headteacher	Berrow
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	11–12 December 2006	286584

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of high social and economic deprivation. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. There are an above-average number of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities, and a similarly high proportion has a statement of special educational need. A much higher than average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school during the academic year is high. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average. Following a period of staffing instability, a new acting headteacher was appointed in October 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Staffing instability caused a great deal of turbulence in the past two years and pupils' academic standards and behaviour deteriorated. The school has now found its direction and is improving, but there are still significant weaknesses which mean that it is not providing an adequate education for some of its pupils. Standards are below average and pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6, whilst improving in English, mathematics and science is still inadequate. This is because of the lack of use of assessment data throughout the school and inconsistencies in teaching and curriculum planning which results in the particular lack of progress made by more able pupils. Insufficient work has been done to raise standards and pupils' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT), where at present they are inadequate. Furthermore, children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory due to inadequate provision. This has a knock-on effect on children's progress because, on entry to Year 1, standards are still below those expected and teachers have to work very hard to bring pupils up to the required standard.

School self-evaluation is accurate and the school clearly knows what needs to be done in order to improve. Effective monitoring and implementation of performance management has resulted in improved teaching in Years 1 to 6, with some examples of good teaching seen in Year 1 and Year 6. However, teachers still teach to the middle-ability range of pupils and, whilst pupils' learning is now satisfactory overall, it is inconsistent because not all teachers are fully aware of how to use assessment data to plan challenging tasks to meet the needs of more-capable pupils and those from minority ethnic background.

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors but opportunities are missed to practice literacy, numeracy and ICT through other subjects. Pupils' personal development and well-being, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Attendance is broadly average and the school is doing all it can to raise attendance levels. Pupils behave appropriately around the school; they have satisfactory attitudes to learning and know about healthy eating and how to stay safe. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education and for their future lives. However, they have too few opportunities to develop independent learning skills. Pupils receive satisfactory care, guidance and support and, even though target setting is at the early stages of development, pupils know what they need to do in order to improve. Partnership with parents is good. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. 'We are getting more involved with our children's learning through the good range of workshops,' said one parent. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory but has started to get better.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but subject leaders are not yet fully trained in raising standards. This has largely been left to the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who have done a sterling job in developing teaching and learning to a satisfactory level but are still working on removing the backlog of

underachievement. In doing so, they have shown that the school has satisfactory capacity to successfully tackle its weaknesses.

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in pupils' standards in ICT, provision in the Foundation Stage, the achievement and progress of more able pupils and the role of subject leaders in raising standards and children's subsequent achievement in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure more able pupils are sufficiently challenged in all activities that they undertake and that teachers' assessment data is used more rigorously in planning tasks to meet these pupils' needs.
- Ensure that appropriate links are made in curriculum planning in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and that subject leaders play a more active role in raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children start school with skill levels below those found in most schools. They do not make sufficient progress in the Foundation Stage. They enter Year 1 with skill levels that are well below those expected nationally in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, but they attain the expected standards in personal, social and emotional development. In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve well in reading because it is well taught. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils, but the achievement of more able pupils is unsatisfactory because these pupils are not being sufficiently challenged in lessons. Standards in ICT are below average and pupils' achievement in this subject is unsatisfactory. Overall, achievement is still unsatisfactory because there is a backlog of underachievement that the school is presently dealing with. Standards have been in decline in Years 3 to 6 over three years (2002 to 2005) but the school has worked very hard at raising standards which have slightly improved in 2006 but are still below average. For example, school leaders recognised that boys had been underachieving and reacted immediately by buying boy-friendly resources, using interactive whiteboards and making sure that boys had plenty of opportunities to talk about what they were going to write. The gap has been successfully narrowed and this has also improved boys' attitudes and behaviour.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Attendance is improving and pupils enjoy coming to school. 'Things are improving around here, teachers really listen to us and we are now learning well', said one pupil. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities and develop their team skills well through sports. They co-operate well with one another and are courteous and polite. Any bullying is quickly picked up by the teachers and acted upon so that pupils feel safe. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their confidence. In guided reading in Year 4, pupils studied a text on bullying which enabled them to talk about their personal boundaries. Pupils support the community by planting bulbs in the Jewellery Quarter and collecting money for a range of charities. They know about healthy eating and eagerly talk about eating five fruit and vegetables per day and how exercise affects their body. Pupils' skills of independent research and organising their own work are too limited and this prevents personal development and well-being from being good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are improving in Years 1 to 6 because of the effective intervention of the local authority and the headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are inadequate in the Foundation Stage. A weakness in teaching in the Foundation Stage is that staff do not always target the Reception pupils sufficiently well and they undertake similar activities to those children who are of nursery age. This restricts their progress. Consistent elements of good teaching ensure that pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to correct their own work, and this is having a positive effect on learning. 'Are you sure that spelling looks right?' and 'Have another think' are phrases often heard in lessons. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 have good relationships with pupils and check their understanding. This enables pupils to grow in confidence.

One of the weaknesses in teaching which prevents it from being good is that teachers are not challenging more-capable pupils sufficiently well, nor are they giving them sufficient opportunities to become independent learners. Teachers teach to the middle of the ability range and more-capable pupils find this approach unchallenging. The teaching of guided reading is good and this is having a positive effect on raising standards in reading. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory but, at times, targets on their individual education plans are not sufficiently well used in planning. These are areas that have been identified for improvement by the school. Whilst teaching and learning are now satisfactory there is still some way to go in ensuring that pupils catch up on the backlog of underachievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all subjects. Satisfactory attention is given to pupils' personal development and well-being and pupils are taught how to identify their emotions and keep calm. The provision for the discrete literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory but opportunities for literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum are inadequate. The school has recognised this as an area for development. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is inadequate because it does not take sufficient account of the national guidance in planning, and pupils, especially those capable of higher achievement, repeat what they already know. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and popular extra-curricular activities, including choir, sport and jazz dance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are appropriately looked after in an environment where they feel valued. Many opportunities are given to pupils to respect other cultures and diversity is encouraged. 'It doesn't matter what colour or religion you are, we are all treated fairly here and teachers are always ready to help', said a Year 6 pupil, speaking for the majority. Child protection procedures are robust and the school is a safe learning environment. Although at the early stage of implementation, guidance to pupils on how to improve their work is satisfactory, and effective examples of target setting were seen in pupils' exercise books. Targets for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are not used consistently in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have done a good job through their effective monitoring of teaching and learning resulting in pupils' recent satisfactory achievement. However, there is still a legacy of underachievement which staff are combating. Systems for tracking pupils' achievement, regular monitoring of teaching and learning and offering support, implementation of performance management and realistic action planning have ensured that the vast majority of pupils are catching up with their learning. The school works well in partnership with other agencies and its self-evaluation is accurate and has been used to improve the quality of teaching.

However, leadership and management are satisfactory overall and not yet good because there are still weaknesses in the provision for Foundation Stage children, the more able older pupils are not making sufficient progress and the roles of middle leaders are not fully developed. Training has been put in place but not all staff are fully aware of how to raise standards and there are still some inconsistencies in practice. The school knows what it needs to do in order to improve, for example, the weaknesses in the Foundation Stage have been identified but there has not been sufficient time

to implement proposals. Governance is satisfactory but the governing body are not yet fully analysing the cost effectiveness of their spending decisions, for example, in relation to children's underachievement in the Foundation Stage.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for telling us so much about your school.

The school is already changing for the better but it is not yet doing enough to make sure that you all do as well as you should. We are asking the staff and governors to make some more improvements and we are recommending that the school gets some extra help over the next year.

You are making satisfactory progress and you clearly like your teachers. Your behaviour is satisfactory and you now have more positive attitudes to learning. You listen well to one another in lessons and you are making good progress in your reading. You are beginning to attend school regularly and this is really making a difference to your learning. Your parents enjoy their workshops and they can now help you more with your homework.

You have helped a lot to improve the school by listening to your teachers and doing what your headteacher expects from you, such as being polite to one another. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to make a few things better for you and you can help in this process by asking your teachers to give you more chances to organise your own work and do some research yourselves. We would like you to have more chance to use computers more often and to use in other subjects what you learn in English and mathematics. Make sure you tell your teachers when work is too easy, especially those of you who do not find learning hard.

We have asked your teachers to plan your lessons so that you can make even better progress. We have also asked that your teachers who are in charge of subjects help your headteacher even more by checking how well you are learning.

We hope that your new school logo will look good on your uniform. Keep up the good work!