



# Brickhouse Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103936  
**Local Authority** Sandwell  
**Inspection number** 286813  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Lois Furness

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Dudhill Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Rowley Regis
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		B65 8HS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5591629
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	207	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 5593766
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Paul Webb
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Newby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 22–23 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 286813
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves a significantly disadvantaged area. Most pupils are White British, with a few pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. Seven new teaching staff, including the headteacher, have been appointed over the last two years. The school has attained bronze and silver Healthy School awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Brickhouse is a satisfactory and improving school, which is achieving its aim of 'striving to learn, improve and grow together'. This is because of strong and determined leadership by the new headteacher who, ably supported by senior management, is very clear about how to improve learning and achievement. Evaluation is thorough, weaknesses are quickly identified and firm action is taken.

Teaching is at least satisfactory, with good features. Teachers are good at using strategies to involve pupils. In lessons, pupils are constantly encouraged to share ideas and check out thinking with a partner. They are very clear about what they have to do to achieve success in their learning and many say how much they enjoy their work. However, not all teachers are secure enough in making accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and this means that work is not consistently matched to pupils' needs. Even so, as a result of better teaching, progress is improving and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 6, progress is rapid and, by the end of the year, pupils attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Reading, however, is much stronger than writing, and too few pupils have a good enough understanding of how to use punctuation correctly and of how to write interesting sentences. They have a narrow vocabulary, which limits their ability to create excitement in their writing, and few pupils have a confident style of joined handwriting. Good strategies have been introduced to improve these weaknesses but it is too early for them to have had a significant influence on standards. The curriculum is satisfactory and is improving as new programmes of work are introduced which identify key skills in each subject. The broad range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors, successfully makes learning more interesting. Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is satisfactory, with good features. Staff work together well in this new unit, where there is good emphasis on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills. This emphasis is paying off and throughout the school there are the happy, smiling faces of well-behaved pupils who want to learn. One pupil said, 'I want to learn so I can get a good job!'

Pupils know how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, keep themselves safe and feel secure in school because of the good care taken. Those pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities and those who may be vulnerable are sensitively supported by adults, including the effective learning mentors. As a result, their achievement is satisfactory. Academic guidance, however, is not as strong. The tracking of pupils' progress is not fully established and the information gathered is not always accurate.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the headteacher has a clear view of what is happening in the school, other leaders and managers are new to their responsibilities and therefore have not had sufficient time to influence improvements in provision. However, they are enthusiastic and eager to become more involved. Despite shortcomings, the school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve, which is combined with a shared and strong determination to do so.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' basic skills in speaking and writing.
- Enable those teachers with leadership and management responsibilities to become more involved in making improvements.
- Develop teachers' skills in making more accurate assessment of pupils' attainment so progress can be checked closely and the findings used when planning the next steps in the pupils' learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

When they start in the Nursery, children's knowledge and skills are well below the levels normally expected. Speaking skills are weak, as are personal, social and emotional skills. Children make satisfactory progress, though standards remain well below the levels expected for their ages when they enter Year 1. They make best progress in personal, social and emotional development because members of staff support them well in forming good relationships and gaining confidence. By Year 6, pupils attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. This indicates good achievement from their low starting point. However, in the past, progress has been uneven and too much has been left until Year 6, where pupils make rapid gains in their learning because of the outstanding teaching they receive. Now, because of improved teaching throughout the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory even though standards by Year 2 are still well below average in writing and mathematics and broadly average in reading. Weak achievement in writing is evident throughout the school as pupils are still hampered by their limited speaking skills.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is close to the national average, with most pupils attending regularly. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with strengths in moral and social development. Pupils know right from wrong. Most pupils behave well and the use of the word STOP – 'several times on purpose' is effectively helping them to understand the difference between bullying and silly behaviour. Pupils' response to the school's efforts to promote safe practices and healthy lifestyles is good. They develop a good sense of community through, for example, the school council and the recently established 'playground buddies.' Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education; their social skills are good but they lack secure basic skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT).

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are improving and, although satisfactory overall, good features are evident in all year groups. Teachers are good at ensuring pupils take an active part in lessons, constantly encouraging them to share and discuss ideas. This gives confidence and helps them to learn from their peers. Pupils know how to make their work better through discussions about how they might succeed and through the good sharing of targets and feedback given in their books. Teaching assistants and learning mentors provide unobtrusive and sensitive support for pupils who have difficulties with aspects of their work, ensuring they are well engaged in lessons.

As a result of training, teachers' knowledge of how to teach writing has improved. The use of assessment is improving but not all teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and consequently work planned does not always meet pupils' needs.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum is practical and interesting, with a strong emphasis on meeting the children's social and emotional needs. Throughout the rest of the school, recently revised curriculum planning provides a satisfactory framework for developing pupils' key skills in a progressive way. The provision for ICT has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their skills by using ICT to support work in other subjects. A broad range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits adds interest to the curriculum and develops pupils' learning further; for example, pupils in Year 1 have been to a local museum as part of their work on buildings and homes. Further extending provision for pupils' cultural development is an area identified by the school for improvement.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is good, with all pupils cherished and valued. One pupil typically said, 'Brickhouse is a friendly place where we all feel safe.' Sensitive support and care is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The school makes good use of external agencies and specialists to promote the welfare of vulnerable pupils when necessary. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements, including risk assessments, are secure. Parents are pleased about the way their children are cared for. Improved arrangements have been introduced recently to more effectively track the progress that pupils make. However, these are not fully established and the information gathered is not always accurate.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher is a good leader who provides a clear vision and strong sense of direction for the school. Parents' and pupils' views reflect this judgment, with one pupil saying, 'We have a great headteacher.' The relatively newly formed senior leadership team (SLT) share his vision and are committed to raising standards and attainment. The procedures for performance management have been recently overhauled to make them more rigorous. There is now a stronger link between school improvement and teachers' own professional development which is improving the quality of leadership and management.

Self-evaluation is good and has enabled the headteacher and SLT to have a secure understanding of what needs to be done to improve. However, subject leaders are not sufficiently aware of how to raise standards as they are new to their posts and rely heavily on the headteacher and SLT to direct them. The school accepts that the school improvement plan is an unwieldy document that is in need of revision in order for it to show more clearly how the school intends to move forward. Governance is satisfactory, with governors keen to play a more active role in the school's strategic planning for future improvement.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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	3
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?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your very friendly welcome during our recent visit to your school. Mr Hemmings and I enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views. We think yours is a satisfactory school that is improving every day.

The things that we particularly liked about it are

- Your headteacher knows exactly what to do to make your school better and better.
- By the time you leave school, most of you are working at the levels expected for your age and you make satisfactory progress.
- Teachers are good at making sure you take part in lessons and know how to improve your work.
- A few of you who have difficulties in your learning are helped very well by the adults in the school.
- You start to enjoy school right from the Foundation Stage.
- It is good that you know how to keep healthy and safe and enjoy helping others, for example, through the school council.

What we have asked the school to do now

- We have asked your teachers to help you become better writers and keep reminding you of vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation as you write. You also need help with your handwriting skills.
- We think that those teachers who are in charge of subjects need to find out more about how they can make your learning better.
- We have asked your headteacher to make sure that teachers know exactly what you are good at and what they need to teach you so you can improve. We hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time in school.