

Bridgewater Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105912
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	287363
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Vincent Devine
Headteacher	Mrs J Ogg
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Bridgewater Street Little Hulton Manchester M38 9WD
Telephone number	0161 7902281
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Introduction

The school was inspected by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is located to the west of Salford and most pupils are from a White British background. Numbers have fallen as parents have moved girls to gain access to a different secondary school. Consequently, there are more boys than girls at the school and the difference is significant in some classes. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average and the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. There has been an unsettled period due to staff absences over the past three years and this has had an adverse effect on standards. The school has recently gained an Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. The school has largely succeeded in addressing previous areas of weakness such as the use of computers and the management of the curriculum. As a result, the school is providing satisfactory value for money. The Foundation Stage staff work very hard to provide a worthwhile curriculum with stimulating and exciting learning activities. The good quality of teaching and learning ensures that all children make good progress, but because of their well below average skills on entry, few achieve the levels expected of children by the end of their Reception year. By Year 2, overall standards remain below average, but most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. Standards by Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science, but school data shows that those who were attending the school in Year 2 make satisfactory progress. Most higher-attaining pupils succeed in attaining the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. Pastoral care and support are strengths and parents showed how much they appreciate this in their very positive responses to the inspection questionnaire. Good relationships between home and school and pupils' good attitudes towards their schoolwork are contributing effectively to pupils' good personal development and well-being. They clearly enjoy being at school and relish the good range of opportunities that they are given. High standards of behaviour are expected and pupils respond positively, ensuring good behaviour and relationships. Attendance is average. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but there are variations through the school. Teachers in some classes do not have high enough expectations of pupils and, as a result, progress suffers. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, especially for those who find learning difficult, and this helps them learn well. Assessment procedures provide good information on the standards being reached, but this information is not always used effectively enough to plan further challenging work. Academic guidance is a weakness. Pupils are often unclear about their targets for learning and as a result, their rate of progress is not as good as it could be. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders have a clear picture of what needs to be improved, although they have identified too many priorities to tackle successfully in the coming year. The school has been fairly accurate in judging its performance; however, the overall level of care, support and guidance is satisfactory rather than good because academic guidance is not effective enough in accelerating pupils' progress. Staff monitor standards closely, but are just beginning to develop their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to give them a clearer picture of strengths and priorities for improvement. The governing body benefits from the leadership of a very conscientious chair of governors who has the school's best interests at heart. Governors' role in sharing the job of evaluating school effectiveness is being carefully developed, but their contribution is limited at present. As a result, the school has a satisfactory capacity to further improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning for all groups of pupils.
- Involve all teachers and governors in monitoring school effectiveness in order to clearly identify and realistically prioritise areas for further improvement.
- Ensure that pupils are given clear guidance on their targets for improvement, and ensure that these are sufficiently challenging.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The effective management of provision in the Foundation Stage compensates well for the well below average standards that most children start with. The enthusiasm and skill of the teachers make learning exciting and fun. As a consequence, children's achievement is good in all areas of learning. Most, however, do not attain the expected levels by the end of their Reception year. Major staff changes have resulted in pupils not always being sufficiently challenged and this has held back their rate of progress. However, the most recent 2006 Year 6 national test results show a slight improvement in the school's overall performance. Nevertheless, standards remained below average in each subject. Inspection evidence and school assessment data show that this improving trend is set to continue in 2007. For example, initiatives to improve English, which was the weakest subject in 2006, have resulted in many more pupils achieving the expected level for their age. Standards in reading have been improved significantly, putting the school well on track to achieve its challenging targets for reading in 2007 at both key stages. Most higher-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are reflected in pupils' good behaviour, relationships and awareness of their own and other cultures. In the Foundation Stage, children settle in quickly, making good progress in all aspects of their personal development. Pupils respond enthusiastically to any responsibilities given to them, such as being school councillors or buddies, or in organising mini-enterprise events. These events are effective in preparing pupils well for the future. Pupils participate with interest in the wide range of out-of-school activities which develop their sporting and creative talents well. The school council is effective in enabling pupils to contribute to decision making. Their work resulted in the provision of further playground equipment. This was in response to their good understanding of the importance of leading a fit and healthy lifestyle. Pupils' commit themselves to the needs of others by holding successful charity fundraising events throughout the year. The school's good links with parents ensures that they are well informed about their children's personal development. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning has been adversely affected by many staff changes and lengthy absences. It is satisfactory overall but with some variations in quality throughout the school. Examples of good teaching were seen and the strengths in these lessons were the effective management of behaviour, the use of modern technology and the 'fun' element introduced to capture pupils' interest. Reading is taught especially well, resulting in a significant improvement in standards by Year 6. The contribution of the many teaching assistants is a key factor, supporting the learning for lower-attaining pupils most effectively. In some instances, however, the teaching for groups withdrawn from classes is not as good as that provided in the classroom. When teachers talk for too long when introducing lessons and their expectations

of what pupils can do are not high enough, learning is not as effective as it should be. In these lessons, many pupils 'switch off' and this affects their rate of progress. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Reception children, for example, enjoyed 'being teacher' when roles were reversed and their teacher pretended to get things wrong! Assessment procedures are good, including in the Foundation Stage, and they clearly identify which pupils are not achieving as well as they should, allowing the school to provide additional support. Assessment information, however, is not always used well enough to set sufficiently challenging targets for some pupils in order to accelerate their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provided is rich and relevant and includes a wide range of additional activities, which the pupils enjoy considerably. Opportunities for sports, music, dance, arts and to learn Spanish are well attended and extend pupils' talents and interests well. The inclusion of swimming, previously identified as an area to improve, supports pupils' health and well-being effectively. The good range of learning activities provided for children in the Foundation Stage is very stimulating, particularly in the outdoor classroom. Consequently, children learn to play and share together well and develop good skills of independence. The wide range of visits, including a residential visit, visitors to school, and themed weeks, effectively link subjects together and provide lively learning experiences for the pupils. An example of this is the recent whole-school project on the Victorians. Provision for information and communication technology has been significantly improved and it is used effectively to enhance learning in other subjects. Pupils' personal, social and health education, strengthened by the work of the learning mentor, enables them to find out about social and emotional aspects of life and encourages them to consider lifestyle choices. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to the whole curriculum, which is suitably and purposefully modified to ensure their complete participation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Levels of care and support are good and parents agree that this is a strength of the school. The pupils say they feel safe and cared for. A typical comment is: 'I've been to lots of schools but in this one bullying is sorted out right away.' Staff know the pupils and their families very well, which helps them to ensure that each pupil is safe and happy. They implement good procedures for safeguarding pupils from harm. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective. Staff who work closely with these pupils do a good job in helping them to make progress of a similar rate as other pupils. However, the academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. Pupils do not always have a sufficient understanding of what their targets are or of what they need to do to achieve them. This restricts the pace at which they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's dedication and commitment to the school are to be admired. Parents appreciate the high level of care for their children. The longstanding and effective partnership with the equally dedicated and conscientious deputy headteacher has helped to assure secure

management at the top of the school. Together, they manage the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities effectively and have ensured that previous inspection issues have been generally improved upon. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is mostly accurate and the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils are taken into account when deciding priorities for improvement. There are, however, too many priorities in the school improvement plan to be realistically tackled this year. Staff absences have disrupted the efficiency of subject leadership. All teachers play a vital role in monitoring pupils' progress and the standards that they achieve. However, their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms is underdeveloped. As a result, the quality of teaching is variable, and in some cases it does not always lead to effective learning for pupils. Overall, governance is satisfactory. The governing body is well led by a knowledgeable chair of governors and all governors are very supportive of the school. Their role in monitoring school effectiveness is only recently being developed.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	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	2
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?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2

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?	2
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.

Annex A

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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making all the inspectors feel so welcome! We really enjoyed talking to you all and looking around your school. The particularly good things about your school are:

- how hard your headteacher and all the staff are working as a team to make school an enjoyable and caring place for you
- how well you all behave in class - it was good to see you all getting on so well together at break times too
- the good start that you all have in the Nursery and Reception classes with lots of interesting things to do indoors and outdoors - I wonder if one determined digger managed to find any worms?
- how well you are cared for and supported by your teachers, their helpers and all the lunchtime staff.

We are sure that you can do better in English, mathematics and science, so we are asking your teachers and the governors to concentrate on improving the standards you reach in these subjects by:

- making sure that your teachers always give each one of you interesting work which makes you think hard in lessons
- checking that all staff are doing their best to help you to make good progress as you move through the school
- making sure that you know what your learning targets are and helping you to achieve them as quickly as possible.

Thank you again for helping us with this inspection. We can see why you enjoy coming to school so much. We thought that your displays from the theme week on Victorians were really interesting. You are right to be proud of your school. We hope that you will continue to work hard and help your teachers to make it even better.