

Bridge Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106032
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	287391
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Trafford
Headteacher	Mrs Kirsty Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2002
School address	Siddington Avenue Bridge Hall Stockport Cheshire SK3 8NR
Telephone number	0161 4807889
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving an area where there are challenging social and economic circumstances. Almost all pupils are White British. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than three times the national average. A very high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Community facilities on the school site include a Children's Centre and Sure Start. Before- and after-school provision for pupils is available. The school has recently achieved the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils and enables them to achieve well. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school because their days are packed with activity. All agree that lessons are fun and that everyone works hard. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance has improved significantly and is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy the chances to use their skills to solve problems in mathematics and science lessons and to develop their imaginations through art, music and drama. Pupils are mindful of others and relationships are good. They feel safe because, they say, there is no bullying or name calling. They are fully confident that there is always an adult on hand to help them when needed. Staying healthy is high on pupils' agenda. They all understand the importance of lots of exercise and a sensible diet, and enjoy healthy options from the lunch menus. Pupils are very keen to take on extra responsibilities which help the smooth running of the school and are good ambassadors for Bridge Hall when taking part in community activities.

In recent years standards have been exceptionally low at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In the 2007 national tests although standards improved they were still well below average. The school met its realistic targets for Key Stage 2 in English. Decisive intervention by the school to boost attainment in mathematics is having a positive impact. Standards in the current Year 6 show continuing signs of improvement in English and, to a slightly lesser extent, mathematics. This represents good achievement, given their starting points and the exceptionally high proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 cohort who have significant additional learning needs. Standards are also improving at the end of Year 2. The Reading Recovery programme, for example, has brought about some remarkable progress and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in reading and writing. Pupils are making good progress throughout the school from very low starting points on entering Nursery class. This is because consistently good teaching is matched well to their varying needs. Lessons are lively and challenging and there is some creative use of learning resources. However, pupils are not encouraged to use computers sufficiently to help them learn across all subjects. This impinges on their development of skills for their future life.

Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. Their learning is planned and managed skilfully by teachers and teaching assistants who are very sensitive to their particular difficulties. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are taught well and make good progress. A child in Reception class, for example, was seen making good headway when confidently linking letters and sounds after only four weeks in school. The good curriculum contributes well to pupils' good achievement and their personal development. It is planned thoughtfully to promote interest and enthusiasm. A varied and interesting range of activities outside of school effectively helps pupils to foster their interests and individual talents.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and governors show a tremendous clarity of vision in the way school priorities are identified and tackled systematically. For example, there has been significant improvement in the quality of care provided. Through training and support for staff the headteacher and governors have brought about a vast improvement in pupils' behaviour. Also, by responding positively to a local authority Intensifying Support Programme, tracking of pupils' progress is both accurate and rigorous. This in turn has led to improved quality of teaching and learning and, as a result, standards are rising. A staff team who clearly recognise their role in school development and accountability for standards and

achievement ably supports the headteacher. Senior leaders play a crucial part in monitoring and evaluating the school's overall performance and contribute well to the broadly accurate picture the school holds of itself. That some of the school's judgements are modest reflects the sense of urgency for continuous improvement which is shared by staff. The school works extremely effectively with the community provision on site and outside agencies which support pupils' learning such as the adjacent community centre where pupils can engage in activities and sports. Links with the local high school are excellent. Governors challenge and support the school effectively. They take an active interest in the school's life and manage finances astutely to ensure good value for money. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Foundation Stage leads to children's good progress. When they first start in the Nursery class their abilities are very low in relation to typical expectations for their age. Many are reluctant to talk or to make choices without adult support. By the end of the Foundation Stage children's confidence has improved greatly. They develop independence and curiosity and enjoy their learning. Although most are still working well below expectations, especially in communication language and literacy, they make good progress overall. Personal, social and emotional development is taught well. Children quickly become confident about leaving parents and carers. They learn to share in activities and to sit sensibly with others during a story because it is expected of them. A good range of activities is planned for children either to work with a teacher or to choose for themselves. Teachers assess children's progress and use information to plan the next steps in learning very well. There is a good emphasis on teaching letters and sounds and teachers provide a good range of resources such as puppets, construction sets and small toys to encourage children to talk. The school recognises that the outside learning environment is not as well planned or as stimulating as it could be. The Foundation Stage is highly regarded by parents, who express their full appreciation for the level of care provided and the progress their children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school.
- Use computers more effectively to help pupils' learning in all subjects.
- Improve outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards throughout the school are well below average although showing good signs of improvement over recent years from exceptionally low levels. This was evident in the national tests at Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in 2007. There was marked improvement in English and science but less so in mathematics. The school was quick to respond by planning extra support for mathematics teaching, which has led to positive results. From their very low starting points on entry to the school, pupils' achievement is good. Each year group has a very high proportion of pupils who have additional needs, including those who require special provision. Regular, careful analysis of pupils' progress by teachers helps them to review targets and plan work more effectively to suit individual needs. As a result, these pupils also make good progress. Currently, school assessments show that the recent improvement in standards is set to continue.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils are polite and well mannered, whether in the playground, at lunch, or welcoming visitors and showing them around their school. They learn their good social skills because adults are good role models. There is seldom a raised voice in the playground, for example, and pupils often shake hands at the end of a competitive game. They have sensible attitudes to health and fitness. They understand the term '5-a-day' regarding fresh fruit and vegetables and their enthusiasm for sports has contributed to successfully achieving the Activemark Award. Pupils show caring attitudes towards others. When a pupil won a box of grapes at the end of an exciting mathematics lesson, by accurately estimating its weight, her first instinct was to share the prize with the group. Pupils develop a satisfactory awareness of different faiths and cultures and respect for others' differences. Attendance and punctuality have improved considerably and are satisfactory. Pupils carry out responsibilities conscientiously and, through the school council, have an active voice in school matters. They contribute well to the community but do not build their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in order to fully secure their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A major strength of teaching and learning throughout the school is its inclusiveness. Parents recognise, and acknowledge in their responses, that their children are valued as important members of the school. This is clearly demonstrated through the relationships seen in lessons and the care teachers take in ensuring pupils' varying needs are met. Assessments are used very well to plan work which challenges pupils at the right level. Resources are used which make learning more meaningful. In an outstanding lesson, pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 used pasta, lentils and rice in order to weigh and measure accurately in grams and kilograms. This brought a 'real life' aspect to the lesson which pupils enjoyed. They concentrated well and achieved the lesson objective exceptionally well. Interactive whiteboards are used well to bring good pace to lessons but there is scope for teachers to plan more effectively for the use of computers by pupils in the classrooms. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Their understanding of pupils' difficulties combined with skilful yet unobtrusive intervention in lessons ensures that help is immediate and effective.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

One of the reasons why pupils achieve well is because the curriculum is well suited to their needs and interests. There is a strong focus on improving English skills but scope to improve mathematics skills and extend the use of ICT across the curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to achieve in sports and the school is making good progress towards the full introduction of French lessons. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of additional activities which broaden pupils' experiences and increase interest and enjoyment of topic work. Visitors to school such as a former evacuee bring their own creative approaches to learning. After-school clubs, both sporting and non-sporting, are popular. The programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship is well established. As a result, pupils are prepared well to make informed choices about their personal safety, well-being and relationships.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is overwhelming agreement among parents that their children are well cared for in school. The school's safeguarding procedures are robust and regularly reviewed to ensure that this is so. Although all staff are prepared to 'go the extra mile' to support pupils, whatever their needs, the work of the learning mentor and inclusion coordinator is particularly effective. The learning mentor has gained the confidence of the local community and has dismantled many of the barriers which stood in the way of achievement. As a consequence, attendance has improved significantly. Aspirations are higher than previously and pupils' talents are being nurtured out of school through links with community groups and 'schools of excellence'. The inclusion coordinator quickly identifies pupils' individual needs and plans the effective support which is helping to raise standards. An outstanding initiative is the establishment of the Purple Class, whereby pupils who require the most help with literacy and numeracy work as a small group during the morning sessions. The opportunity to express themselves as group members is raising self-esteem and helping them to achieve well. Academic support and guidance is outstanding. Pupils' progress is monitored very carefully and underachievement is swiftly tackled. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership has had an immense impact on the school's development since her appointment. The influence of her energetic leadership and willingness to face up to challenges is felt beyond the school boundaries resulting in its increasingly high profile in the local community. Earlier successful work with the local authority has led to further initiatives; for example, working with other schools in similar challenging circumstances to focus on improving learning quality and to introduce the new framework for literacy and numeracy. The school recognises there is more still to be done. The school development plan realistically sets out the right priorities for improvement and provides a good guide for leaders to measure their success. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Their good management helps to shape the school's future; for example, by improvement to the school environment and resources which encourage attendance and help to raise achievement.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

Inspection of Bridge Hall Primary School, Stockport, SK3 8NR

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. Can I say a special thank you to the school council members who showed me round when I first arrived. I enjoyed talking to you all and finding out how much you enjoy school. I was really impressed by your good behaviour and how polite and well mannered you are. I was also pleased to see that your attendance is improving. That's very important so keep on trying.

You have a good school. Your teachers make lessons fun and help you to make good progress. The standards you reach in mathematics are not as high as everyone would like them to be but they are improving because of everyone's hard work. All of the grown-ups in school take extremely good care of you and you take good care of each other. Your headteacher leads the school well and always tries to make sure you get the best possible education.

Although your parents, teachers and school governors are very proud of your school, everyone would like to see it become even better. We discussed how this might be done and came up with some ideas which your teachers and governors are going to work on. The first is to help you to reach higher standards in mathematics. Of course, I'm sure you will do your share of the hard work too. Secondly, I'd like the teachers to plan more times in the classrooms for you to use computers to do your work. Finally, I would like children in Nursery and Reception classes to have a better outside area to make their play and learning more fun.