

Bowling Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107234
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	287752
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Ward
Headteacher	Ms S Hardcastle
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	New Cross Street West Bowling Bradford West Yorkshire BD5 8BT
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bowling Park Primary is a much larger than average school serving an area of significant social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is well above the national average, and many pupils join and leave the school part way through their education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bowling Park Primary is a satisfactory school that is showing clear signs of improvement. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below nationally expected standards. Many pupils speak English as an additional language and a significant number of pupils are at the very early stages of learning English. Recent strategies have begun to have a positive impact on the attainment of some pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards by the end of Year 6 are significantly below the national average, although given the low starting point of these pupils this represents satisfactory progress overall.

Much attention is paid to pupils' personal development and the school cares for them well. Almost all pupils are well behaved, both in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered, and have a positive attitude towards learning. One particularly strong feature is the way in which pupils support each other, both formally, through the buddy scheme, and informally in the classroom and playground. For example, one pupil willingly acted as an interpreter for another who had very limited knowledge of the English language. A group of older pupils spoke enthusiastically about how much they enjoyed caring for the younger ones, and said, 'there is no need for anyone to feel lonely at our school.' There is an effective rewards system that successfully motivates pupils and they speak with great enthusiasm about their weekly 'golden time'.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Pupils make the best progress in lessons where they are encouraged to work independently or in small groups, with structured support from adults. In such lessons, they are often encouraged to take an active part in assessing their own work and consequently develop a good understanding of what they need to do to improve further. However, in the majority of lessons there is too much emphasis on work which is directed and controlled closely by the teacher and this can slow the rate of pupils' progress.

Support staff play a vital role in the work of the school. They provide help for pupils with learning difficulties and play an essential part in helping pupils with limited understanding of English to develop their language skills.

The school has responded well to the challenges faced in recent years. The senior management team shows a strong commitment to improvement and the staff are collectively working hard to meet the many varied and complex needs of learners at the school. Although it is too early to judge the impact of some initiatives, there are early signs of improvement in several aspects of the school's work, including achievement and standards. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory; in particular, there has been considerable investment in information and communication technology (ICT). The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the capacity to make further improvements is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Parents are largely supportive of the school's work, a typical view being, 'our school has had many challenges, but the staff are hardworking and devoted to the children.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all at least good.
- Increase all pupils' involvement in independent learning activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

On entry to the Reception class, pupils' attainment in all areas of learning is well below that expected for their age. Satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage results in pupils making adequate progress towards early learning goals. Although standards in Years 1 and 2 remain below average, the school's strong focus on the development of communication and language skills is beginning to impact positively on attainment. National test results in 2006 in reading and mathematics were higher than in previous years. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006 were significantly below national expectations, partly due to the high number of pupils joining and leaving the school at various times during the year. Nevertheless, given their low starting point, pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at school. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language, make similar progress to that of other pupils because they are given extra help in developing skills and meeting targets. The school has started to tackle the issue of low attainment and strategies are now beginning to take effect. A rigorous system for analysing assessment data has recently been introduced and is helping the school to work towards achieving its ambitious and challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The great majority of pupils are well behaved, welcoming to visitors and are positive about school. They enjoy learning, developing new skills and taking part in all that the school provides. The school council makes a contribution to the school's work, such as by leading improvements to the playground. Befriending systems help pupils to develop responsibility and they respond to this with keenness and enthusiasm. Bullying and racism are rare but are dealt with effectively when they occur and pupils say that they feel safe. Despite the school's extensive efforts, attendance levels, though broadly satisfactory, are below average, but are slowly improving. Assemblies, including high quality pupil-led presentations, contribute well to spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is high profile; aspects of a wide range of different cultures are regularly celebrated. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and most relate well to each other and to adults. They contribute to the wider community, for example, taking part in fundraising. They develop self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded, for example, through the 'Star of the Week' scheme and 'Good Citizen' awards. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy the many opportunities for sport that the school provides.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The majority of teachers carefully consider the needs of individual pupils when planning tasks and activities. Good relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all lessons. Effective use of ICT, including interactive whiteboards, is typical of most teaching. Computers are used well to enhance learning and the pupils' keenness and enthusiasm for ICT is obvious. In virtually all cases, support staff are used well and provide valuable assistance to pupils with particular

learning needs, including those who are at a very early stage of learning English. The best lessons focus on encouraging pupils to work independently with carefully targeted support from adults. In such lessons, pupils successfully develop responsibility for their learning and are fully involved in identifying the steps necessary to improve their work. However, this good practice is not yet sufficiently widespread. Most lessons are too dominated by teacher-led activities, and pupils are not always adequately involved in setting and reviewing their own targets for development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum satisfactorily provides for the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. Recently, there has been a strong drive to improve provision for literacy, numeracy and science and this is beginning to impact positively on standards. All subject work is carefully planned to ensure that requirements are met and pupils are beginning to build on their skills from year to year. The school recognises that links between subjects are currently underdeveloped, and is working to establish opportunities for pupils to practise skills across a range of subjects.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum and contribute to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school, with all staff showing genuine concern for pupils' welfare. There are effective systems which help to safeguard pupils. Pastoral care is good, and staff do all that they can to ensure a smooth transition when pupils join the school or move on to secondary school. Support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties is well organised. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has started to track pupils' achievements increasingly carefully so that weaknesses can be identified and overcome. In a few cases, pupils are actively involved in setting precise targets for development; this process supports them in making good progress. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school and, as a result, pupils are not always fully aware of exactly what steps they must take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been successful in establishing a culture of improvement that is shared by leaders and managers at all levels. Although there have been a number of significant changes in staffing at senior levels, members of the current leadership team share a strong commitment to raising standards and are aware of the school's main priorities for development. These are identified in good-quality improvement planning, which includes ambitious targets.

Responsibilities are well matched to the skills and expertise of individual staff. Teachers with middle management roles are encouraged to develop their skills. For example, subject leaders have recently become more closely involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning within their subjects. There is an established programme of regular lesson observations and outcomes are suitably linked to training activities for staff. Regular training for support staff

helps to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their roles well. Although it is too early to judge the impact of most of the recently implemented strategies, there is evidence to show that the school, with support from the local authority, is making some progress in improving the overall quality of provision.

Governance is satisfactory; members of the governing body fulfil all statutory responsibilities and assist school leaders in making decisions about future developments.

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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	3
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	4
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	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?	2

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	2
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	2
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 very much for making us feel so welcome in your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, hearing your views and watching you learn.

There are lots of things that we liked about your school. We are really pleased that you feel well cared for and you appreciate all the things that the staff do for you. You behave well and are very polite and well-mannered. We thought that one of the best things was the way in which you care for each other. You told us all about how good the Bowling Buddies are and it was fantastic to see you helping each other during lessons. It's really good that so many of you take part in the lunchtime and after school activities and you obviously enjoy your weekly 'golden time.'

Many of you told us about your personal targets, such as 'to be a good role model', and we thought that this was really good. Some of you also told us about what you needed to do to improve your work; for example, one pupil said that to improve his writing he needed 'to develop use of connectives and adverbs!' We thought that this was really impressive and we've asked the staff to help every one of you to understand exactly what you need to do to make good progress. We know that you are keen to learn because you told us that you want to do really well in your lessons!

We think that Bowling Park is a satisfactory school that is improving. The staff are working hard to help you to do your best. It is important that you work with your teachers to raise standards at the school; you can help by working harder in class and always trying to produce the best work you possibly can.

There is so much for you to be proud of. We hope that you and the staff will build on all these good things and make Bowling Park a really successful school.