

Myrtle Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107437
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	287817
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Brooks
Headteacher	Mr David Fox
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	Ash Terrace Bingley West Yorkshire BD16 1HB
Telephone number	01274 564681
Fax number	01274 776211

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated close to the town centre and serves a population that is on the low side of average in terms of deprivation. It is very popular and has a waiting list. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are of mixed heritage backgrounds. The proportion of pupils in receipt of a free school meal is average, as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has achieved Investors in People, the Healthy School Award, International Immediate Award, SportsMark Award, ArtsMark Silver and the Primary Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The comment that 'ordinary children are helped to do the extraordinary', sums up the feelings of parents about this outstanding school. This is a school that is not content to rest on its laurels and is continually testing itself to improve what it offers to pupils, parents and the community.

Pupils make remarkable progress because of excellent teaching and an imaginative curriculum. Detailed recording enables teachers to note achievement, quickly identify gaps in learning and set aspirational targets. On entering the school, children's attainment is broadly average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of effective provision. Progress accelerates in Years 1 and 2, so by Year 2, standards are well above average. As a result of inspirational teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6, standards are very high, with the school being consistently in the top 10% of schools nationally for the amount of progress pupils make between Years 2 and 6.

It is the vision and outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, senior teachers and governors that has enabled the school to uphold its high standards. Their aim to provide 'an excellent education for the children of our community' has prompted creative thinking, resulting in more effective management and even greater achievement. Since the last inspection, what was an isolated school in a tatty, unsuitable building has become an exceedingly effective environment where learning is not limited to the school day. The school has enthusiastically supported the valuable Aire Valley Cluster of six primary schools. This has allowed opportunities to share professional expertise and resources that have led to improved provision and achievement in literacy, sport, the creative arts, and before and after-school care. Furthermore, the knowledge and skill of senior managers have been used to support less effective schools across the city.

Pupils make remarkable gains in their personal development because of the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils thrive and behave exceptionally well because they have so much to do that interests them. The expectation that every child comes to school to learn and be safe, is evident in the tremendous care, support and guidance pupils receive. Having been well above average for a number of years, however, attendance rates have slipped to broadly average. This is because some parents are taking pupils on holiday in school time. This adversely affect the progress of a few pupils.

Leaders have a very clear view of the school's strengths and know exactly what needs to be done to sustain the excellent provision. The distribution of responsibilities means all staff have an equal part to play in the school's future. This, alongside their skill and enthusiasm, places the school in an outstanding position to maintain its high standards and to continue to provide extremely good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is excellent. Children enter the Nursery with average abilities and make very good progress. Progress in the Reception class has, until recently, not been as pronounced. Nevertheless, staff training and changes have meant that progress is accelerating and is especially

good in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Leaders are quick to respond to any variations in standards. Though standards in mathematics were above average in Year 2 in 2006, they were not as good as those in reading and writing. As a result of special classes, work with parents and 'Friday Investigations', standards in mathematics have improved, especially for boys and higher attaining pupils. Similarly, while standards in English in Year 6 in 2006 were above average, higher attaining pupils did not do as well as they should in writing. Additional tutoring and a focus on imaginative writing have resulted in greater achievement. This is especially evident in writing in other subjects with, for example in history, accounts of Ancient Egyptian 'mummification' being particularly vivid.

Pupils who are academically gifted and those with talent in sport and the arts are provided for very effectively and helped to progress extremely well, as are pupils with learning difficulties. Leaders know that, although pupils achieve well in most aspects of information and communication technology (ICT), progress is patchy and they have identified this on their next improvement plan.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

From entering the Nursery, children grow in confidence. In all age groups, pupils learn to respect others and appreciate diversity. Behaviour is very good, and pupils show boundless enthusiasm in their work and play. Those experiencing difficulties transferring from Foundation Stage to Year 1 have been given tremendous support and now show increased maturity. Pupils are safety conscious, make healthy choices and are very well prepared for life outside school. Although most pupils are of White British origin, they have a very good understanding of other cultures. This is gained as a result of a link with a school with predominantly Asian pupils and from their European partnership with schools in Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and France. Pupils are amazed by the work produced by children as young as five in their Romanian link school, describing the children's efforts at glass and egg painting as 'awesome'. Both the school and the town benefit from pupils' endeavours to be good citizens. For example, pupils are determined to influence the development of their local shopping precinct and have spent time and effort consulting residents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Leaders have been modest in their judgement of good. It is outstanding teaching that enables pupils to make such good progress and achieve very high standards. Teachers have an extremely good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of their pupils. Their expectations are high. They challenge pupils rigorously, planning carefully to ensure activities stretch all capabilities. Teachers and learning support assistants form impressive teams, working with individuals and groups to accelerate progress. For example, pupils in Year 1 made remarkable gains in speaking, listening and reasoning when they worked with their support assistant during a 'thinking skills' session. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning saying, 'teachers make even maths fun. It's great. We learnt about fractions very quickly when we had sweets to make it real'. Accurate assessment and rigorous marking in books enable pupils to recognise what they do well and what they need to do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum contributes considerably to pupils' desire to learn and to their achievement. In addition to the acquisition of excellent basic skills, the provision for sport and the arts, including well established links with local secondary schools, contribute well to pupils' well-being and personal development. The locality is used particularly well to give pupils a greater knowledge of the world whilst a very wide range of visits and visitors make learning meaningful. Activities with other schools have had a considerable impression on pupils. For example, the writing and production of an opera about the Bronte sisters with pupils from different cultural backgrounds, which promoted remarks such as, 'It was fabulous, it made me really, really happy', and 'My mum cried,' demonstrate the impact of the venture. Leaders have identified a review of the provision for ICT and rethinking the curriculum to create links between subjects and promote deeper learning, as areas for development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are full of praise for the excellent care, support and guidance their children receive. They especially appreciate the caring, dedicated staff and the extended day provision. In particular, much valued are the family workshops such as learning French and taking part in dance alongside their children. Parents contribute to pupils' achievements by playing an important part in checking on their progress and setting them challenging targets.

Procedures for health and safety and for safeguarding pupils are in place and known to all staff. Pupils are helped take a sensible attitude to risks and challenges. The increasing number of vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and those who are experiencing family difficulties, are all very well supported by very good links with other professionals and the parents' support team. Pupils are exceedingly well prepared for their move to secondary education. Numerous links, including lessons taught by a secondary school teacher, visits, and mixed teams of pupils from different primary schools at sporting events, ensure smooth transition.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Since the last inspection, leaders have taken a critical look at themselves. Conscious of the previous inspection criticism of middle management, they have dovetailed their skills, restructured and redistributed responsibilities. This has enabled them to become more effective and has produced a team that has a very clear focus on continually improving pupils' learning and achievement through rigorous evaluation of the quality of teaching and of pupils' work. As part of the change, all classroom staff are valued members of 'learning area teams' and say they feel they make an important contribution to the success of the school.

Equally, the role of governors has developed considerably. Discussions are lively and focused on achievement. Governors are not afraid to question, wryly commenting 'sometimes we dig too much!' In addition to ensuring standards remain high, governors have provided very good support for the before and after-school care, contributing to the well-being of pupils and

parents alike. Leaders and governors are committed to a continuous cycle of improvement that is beneficial not only to the school, but also the community.

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Inspection of Myrtle Park School, Bingley, BD16 1HB

First, may I say a big thank you for the way you looked after me and for helping me with my work. I really enjoyed my short time with you and thought the garlic and chilli bread you baked for me was yummy. Your school gives you an excellent education. It would take me far too long to list all the very good things, so here are the ones I found especially pleasing.

- You make remarkable progress and reach very high standards because of terrific teaching.
- You are very well behaved and enthusiastic about all the exciting activities yours teachers provide.
- You are justifiably very proud of the work you have done to improve your school and town.
- You have a very good understanding of keeping safe and healthy.
- I could see from photographs and from talking to you how much you enjoy your sport, art and drama and how proud you are of the opera you performed.
- Your parents really appreciate how well adults look after you.
- Your headteacher, senior teachers and governors manage your school extremely well.

I am a bit concerned that attendance for some of you has dropped because you go on holiday in school time. I'm sure you will help put this right. I trust you will continue to work hard and keep up these very high standards. I wish you well for the future.