



# Bracken Edge Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 107909  
**Local Authority** Leeds  
**Inspection number** 287952  
**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Lynne Davies

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Newton Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Leeds
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		West Yorkshire LS7 4HE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2623335
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	322	<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2374351
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Moore
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Julie Harkness
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves a multi-ethnic community in an inner city area of Leeds. A large percentage of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and many speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is rising and is now above average. The headteacher took up post in January 2007, having been the acting headteacher for one term.

The school has a Healthy School award and the Stephen Lawrence award for promoting racial equality.

The fabric of the building is still a cause for concern, as it was at the time of the last inspection in 2001. This presents many challenges for the school while they await plans for a new building on site to be finalised.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards throughout the school and provision in the Foundation Stage.

Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are well below average and pupils make inadequate progress. This has been the picture for several years. The school's evaluation of its performance recognises that standards and achievement are not good enough. The recently appointed headteacher has put in place suitable action plans to improve things, but although they are beginning to bear fruit they are at too early a stage of development to have had a significant impact. Nevertheless, satisfactory leadership at all levels, combined with appropriate recent initiatives, show that there is the capacity to move the school forward. Staff and governors are united behind the new headteacher and demonstrate a determination to remedy issues of declining standards and achievement. However, some leaders and managers are still developing the necessary skills to rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's performance.

When children start in the Nursery class, their skills are well below those expected for their age. Many have significant delay in speech and language development. Progress through the Foundation Stage is inadequate because the curriculum for these children is not planned or taught well enough to allow them to develop basic skills. Consequently, many start Year 1 unable to make the necessary progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but inconsistent, ranging from good to inadequate. Inconsistencies in teachers' expectations and use of assessment slow pupils' progress. The curriculum is satisfactory overall in meeting the needs of pupils. There is strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of healthy eating and the importance of exercise. 'Space 2', the extended school provision, adds a further creative dimension to the curriculum. The colourful, welcoming entrance to the school is a witness to the importance placed on encouraging an appreciation of the arts.

The care, guidance and support of pupils and their personal development are satisfactory. Pastoral care is particularly strong and is seen from the moment children come into Nursery. There are inconsistencies, however, in the amount of academic guidance and support provided to pupils. Consequently, too many are unclear about how they might improve their work and this limits their progress. Pupils behave well and attendance is improving. Pupils say they enjoy school and find it a safe and welcoming place. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the school and praise the care and commitment of staff. They say 'there is a real buzz about the school' and appreciate being able to make their views and ideas known through their parent council. Racial harmony is a strong feature of this multicultural school where pupils are encouraged to think through their actions and words and consider how they affect others.

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

- Increase the rate of progress and raise standards and achievement throughout the school
- Improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage
- Achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching and ensure that inadequate teaching is eliminated
- Ensure that all leaders and managers are equipped with the skills needed to rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards have declined since the last inspection and are now well below average. In 2006 there was a further significant drop in test results, particularly in reading and writing at Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 results in all subjects also dropped and showed that mathematics was particularly weak. Girls did much better than boys but all significantly underachieved. Pupils' progress is inadequate. This is also the case for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and some strategies are now in place to improve achievement. However, the impact of these interventions is yet to be fully seen. The school was able to provide evidence that pupils currently in Year 6 are making better progress and are on track to achieve their targets, which will bring their standards closer to national averages. Progress is, however, variable across the school.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and the school council gives pupils an opportunity to show initiative. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, respectful and supportive of one another. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, their cultural awareness is really strong due to the emphasis given to this aspect within the curriculum. The good provision for physical education and strong partnerships with other providers increase pupils' opportunities for healthy exercise. Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils and families say that children enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. Pupils' work for charities helps them to consider the needs of the wider world. Preparation for the next stage of education has been weakened, however, by low achievement in basic skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good relationships fostered by teachers promote good behaviour so that pupils are ready and willing to learn. When teachers make their expectations clear learners rise to the challenge and there is a hum of focused activity as work gets under way. In these situations learning is good. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school so progress is patchy. Teachers and leaders are beginning to realise that they can learn from each other in the pursuit of higher standards and where this is happening there are clear benefits. The school acknowledges that it still has a long way to go in building assessment into the routine of every lesson so that pupils are helped to pinpoint where they are doing well and how they can improve. In the marking of work there is an absence of comments to encourage pupils to aim for the next level of learning and to involve them in assessing for themselves how well they are doing.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

There is an appropriate focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and the curriculum is beginning to incorporate opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subjects. The literacy and numeracy coordinators have ably led recent improvements in provision for basic skills, but the full impact on standards and achievement is yet to be seen. The school is reviewing its curriculum to provide more interesting and meaningful learning experiences by linking subjects where content overlaps. Visits within the local environment and further afield open pupils' eyes to the world outside school and contribute to their enjoyment of learning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities with a strong emphasis on sport. The extended school provision on site adds a further creative dimension to the curriculum. However, the Foundation Stage provision does not give enough emphasis to the development and progression of key skills.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has for some time tracked the progress of pupils. Recently this information has been put to good use to plan and deploy additional help to meet pupils' needs. This focused support is beginning to improve progress for those pupils who are not performing as well as they should but the full impact has yet to be seen. A new special needs coordinator has made a start on identifying pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and mobilising resources to support them. The school is justifiably proud of its pastoral care. With the support of partner agencies, it meets the acute needs of many vulnerable children. Parents particularly value the way the 'caring and committed staff' look after their children. They report that the early morning session of 'wake up shake up' in the playground helps motivate their children to get to school

on time. All statutory regulations for the care, protection, health and safety of pupils are in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the way ahead and a determination to achieve challenging goals for the school. The quality of self-evaluation is mainly accurate and is satisfactorily supporting the school's drive to improve. The headteacher has sought support from outside agencies to enable the school to move forward at a more rapid pace and this approach is working. Since taking up post the headteacher has dealt effectively with a number of significant financial and contractual issues as well as undertaking thorough school self-review. Many of the initiatives are already beginning to show some impact but it will take time for them to significantly improve pupils' achievement and standards. Governors are supportive and are developing their role in challenging the school. An energetic management team shares the vision for improvement but its members have not yet all developed the skills of monitoring and evaluating with sufficient rigour.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
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	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### 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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

We very much enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for being so helpful and for the part you all played in the inspection.

You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and how safe and well cared for you feel. We were impressed with your behaviour and your politeness in lessons and around the school. We saw how much fun you have in your 'wake up and shake up' session in the school playground at the beginning of the school day. You told us how much you enjoy all the different activities your school offers you.

We also found some important things that need to be better so we have given your school a Notice to Improve. This means that your school will have another visit from inspectors to check that the areas we think could be improved have moved on enough. We have asked your school to improve the standards of your work in English, mathematics and science and to improve the way learning is organised for the younger children so that they progress more quickly. We have asked your school to make sure that all of you benefit from well taught lessons. Finally, we have suggested that the school could make some improvements to the way it checks on how well it is working.

We want you to work hard with your teachers and your new headteacher to make sure that everyone does their best to achieve their targets. We want your achievement and progress to be the best it can possibly be. Your teachers are going to play their part and so must you. You all need to work together as a team for your school to improve.

I wish you well with all the projects you have planned. Good luck!