

Bradwell Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110369
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	288648
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dianna Moylan
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Kennington
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	Walgrave Drive Bradwell Milton Keynes MK13 9AZ
Telephone number	01908 318088
Fax number	01908 319910

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2007
Inspection number	288648

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bradwell Village became a junior school in September 2006. Prior to this, pupils joined the school in Year 4 and left at the end of Year 7. The school serves a socially diverse area and an average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Although the large majority of the pupils are White British, the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is larger than that found in most schools. These pupils are from a wide range of backgrounds, the largest group being those of Black African heritage. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is about average. An average proportion is identified with learning difficulties. The school has received the Healthy Schools, Investors in People, Artsmark Silver and International School awards and the 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: 3

Bradwell Village provides a satisfactory standard of education. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. Pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils enjoy lessons and are eager to improve and many benefit from the good range of out-of-school activities. They behave well in and out of lessons, relate well to each other, play with good regard for each other's safety and adopt healthy lifestyles. Most parents are supportive of the school, one commenting that she was pleased with her children's progress and '...the confidence they have gained since attending the school. They have both been given opportunities to shine.'

A combination of satisfactory leadership, management, teaching and curriculum planning ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress, whatever their background, ability or experience of English. The headteacher and deputy, well supported by core subject co-ordinators and year leaders, are clearly focused on identifying weaknesses and working with staff to tackle them. They have ensured that the school has responded well to its last inspection. Improved monitoring of teaching and learning means that the school leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is performing and what it needs to do to improve. Previous weaknesses in teaching have largely been dealt with but some inconsistencies remain. In particular, not enough is expected of more able pupils in some lessons and, occasionally, the pace of learning for all pupils is too slow. Nevertheless, pupils are benefiting from increasing amounts of good teaching and, in good lessons, their progress is good.

The school takes good care of its pupils and provides good support for those with particular learning or English language needs. Links with outside agencies are well used to enhance the support provided. A much closer check is now kept on pupils' academic progress. This information is used well to highlight potential underachievement, set clear improvement targets for pupils and provide extra help where it is needed. The leaders analyse assessment information thoroughly to identify trends, but are sometimes hindered by having to evaluate data in too many formats. The school has, rightly, identified the need to slim-down these cumbersome systems and plans are in hand.

The results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 fell in 2006 and were below average, having improved in each of the previous two years. School records shows that this was a lower performing group when they first started school in Year 4, but the results were unexpectedly low. The school recognised that pupils made too little progress, particularly in writing, and too few of them reached the higher Level 5. Staff are working determinedly to rectify this. They have adopted a more consistent approach to teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening and introduced strategies to raise the profile of, and increase pupils' interest in, writing. As a result, standards are rising, but more remains to be done. The school leaders are not complacent and, given their track record, they have good capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in writing.
- Reduce inconsistencies in teaching and offer greater challenge to higher attaining pupils.
- Sharpen systems for analysing performance data.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils join the school with a range of attainment that varies from year to year, but, overall, it is average. They achieve satisfactorily to reach average standards. Although progress and standards dipped in the 2006 national tests, work to secure improvement, particularly in writing, is raising standards. Increasing amounts of good teaching are helping to accelerate pupils' progress and improved academic guidance means that pupils now have a better understanding of how they should improve. They are more aware of how their writing should be structured to take account of its purpose and the nature of the audience. More remains to be done, for example, to ensure that pupils use and develop their writing in other subjects, but the improvements mean that those currently in Year 6 are on track to reach their challenging targets. There is no significant difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils but, occasionally, the progress of the more able slows when too little is expected of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. Pupils behave well and feel safe and secure in school. As one reported, 'There is not much bullying here,' and if it occurs then, 'it is sorted out quickly'. A 'Brad's Buddy' is on hand at break times for pupils who may need someone to talk to or play with. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and agree that they should not be allowed to eat chocolate at break times. Pupils make a good contribution to school life. They enjoy taking on extra responsibility, for example, by becoming members of the school council, playground leaders, global leaders or joining the healthy schools group. Pupils contribute well to the wider community through recycling and raising money for charities. The highly successful and popular school website and 'BearWaves' radio station are both managed by pupils. Attendance has risen in recent years and is in line with the national average. Pupils' satisfactory grasp of basic skills and their ability to work co-operatively mean they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The staff have worked well with school leaders to tackle areas of weakness identified in the last inspection. Pupils are benefiting from increasing amounts of good teaching and, in lessons where this occurs, their progress is good. Here, brisk, purposeful questioning motivates and captures pupils' attention. Planning takes good account of pupils' capabilities, so that harder work is provided to challenge those who need it. Occasionally, the pace of the lesson is too slow so that some pupils become restless. In addition, in otherwise satisfactory lessons, too little is expected of the more able pupils, which slows their progress. Staff share a common approach to teaching literacy and numeracy and this is contributing to the rising standards. Most lessons are calm and purposeful. Teachers are clear about what pupils are expected to learn and they ensure that pupils understand these objectives. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The marking of pupils' work has improved and this plays a part in their good understanding of how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Better planning for writing and mathematics is contributing to pupils' improving progress and information and communication technology skills are well planned. The school has rightly identified the need to strengthen links between subjects to make learning more meaningful and, in particular, to provide more consistent opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. Plans are in hand. The curriculum generally meets pupils' differing needs, including those with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language. Planning for more able pupils sometimes lacks sufficient precision about how the work will challenge them. The school provides a good range of activities to enrich the curriculum. This includes French and regular 'creative weeks', dedicated to art, music, dance and drama, which add excitement and interest to pupils' learning. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs for activities such as art and craft, digital art, drama and gardening contribute well to pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are valued and this contributes to their good personal development. Good links with outside agencies help to meet pupils' diverse learning and English language needs. Those who are potentially vulnerable are identified and helped quickly. Induction programmes are good and help pupils settle quickly, and their transfer to secondary school is well managed. Child protection arrangements are secure. Assessment procedures and systems for tracking pupils' academic progress have improved. Information from test results and other assessments is analysed conscientiously to ensure that support is targeted where it is most needed, but systems for analysing data are too time-consuming. Pupils are set clear improvement targets. Their good understanding of these targets, and what they need to do next, is a strong factor in the rising standards. Pupils appreciate the help and patience shown by their teachers and confirm there is an adult they could turn to if they had a problem.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory and there are some key strengths. The headteacher and deputy, well supported by other senior staff, provide good leadership that is focused on identifying and tackling weaknesses. The leaders now have an accurate view of how well the school is doing, and what can be improved, because systems to check on the school's performance have improved. The monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and well organised. Areas for development are clear, staff work well as a team to tackle them, but the leaders recognise that they have not yet smoothed out all of the inconsistencies in teaching. Governors are supportive and the chair is actively involved in the life of the school. Other governors are less involved, but have appropriate strategies for gathering information that are helping them to begin to hold the school to account.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------

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 effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	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	2
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 the friendly way you welcomed us to school for the recent inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you in lessons. You gave us lots of helpful information. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

Your school is satisfactory and your work is similar to the work we find in many schools. Watching you in lessons, we can see that you work hard and try to do your best. Your work is improving because you and the staff are working well together to make things better. We can see that you have been working hard to improve your writing, for example. We were pleased to see that you know your targets and understand what you need to do next. This is important because we want you to carry on improving. Your teachers make sure that you get extra help if you need it, and many of you told us that they are helpful when you are stuck. We also want them to make sure that those of you who can do harder work always get it. We have asked them to make sure that even more of your lessons are good and that you always learn quickly enough.

Your headteacher and staff know how well your school is doing and what needs to improve. They keep a close check on your work and they spend a lot of time looking at test results and other information to see what could be done better. They are going to make this easier by using a computer program that will save them a lot of time. We agree that this is an important thing to do.

We are pleased with the way that you all get on together in lessons and on the playground. You told us how you feel safe and well looked after. We agree with you. Because of your good behaviour and the care the staff take of you, you are able to get on with your work in lessons and play safely. We were pleased to see so many of you helping by doing jobs around the school and by being members of the school council and the healthy schools group. Well done.

Once again, thank you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed being in your school and we wish you good luck for the future. We know you will work with your teachers to help your school to carry on improving.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams Lead inspector