



Bransty Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112167
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289189
Inspection dates 15–16 February 2007
Reporting inspector Arthur Allison

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mona Road
School category	Community		Bransty, Whitehaven
Age range of pupils	3–11		Cumbria, CA28 6EG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01946 852652
Number on roll (school)	160	Fax number	01946 852653
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Stephen Jackson
		Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Coates
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 15–16 February 2007	Inspection number 289189
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and includes a unit for Hearing Impaired pupils. All pupils are of White British heritage. The area suffers from significant levels of social deprivation and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but a high proportion of them have a statement of special educational need. The school has far more boys than girls and many pupils either join or leave the school part way through their schooling. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below that typical for children of their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bransty is a good school. It provides good value for money. The provision for pupils who have hearing impairments is good. The vast majority of parents have every confidence in the school. One wrote, 'To hear my son read me a story and tell me something about his day is wonderful.'

Achievement is good. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. Standards are above the national average by the end of Year 6. Throughout the school pupils' skills in writing are weaker than those in other subjects. The move to planning that links subjects more closely is ensuring learning is more purposeful and is beginning to help raise standards. This was shown, for example, in a Year 1 and 2 science lesson that provided good speaking, listening and writing opportunities. Purposeful leadership and good teaching focus sharply on what individual pupils need to do to meet the realistic but challenging targets that are set for them. Teachers check on pupils' learning at the end of lessons. Marking usually ensures that pupils know what they have achieved, but does not indicate frequently enough what they need to do to improve further. The good level of pastoral care and support is distinctive and encourages pupils to give of their best.

Good personal development and good basic skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and beyond. Pupils are polite, well behaved and know how to stay safe. They enjoy coming to school because they know that all staff want to help them do their best. They have a good grasp of the need for a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities through the school council and in raising money for charities. Older pupils take on and fulfil responsibilities with confidence, for example as office monitors.

Leadership and management are good. The school's self-evaluation is clear about what it should do in the drive to raise standards further. Given the purposeful leadership, the rising standards and the commitment of the staff, it is evident that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by improving pupils' writing skills.
- Ensure that marking helps pupils to know what they have to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with hearing impairments, achieve well. They make good progress throughout the school to reach standards that are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2.

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery class is well below what is typical of children of their age. They make good progress in response to good quality provision. By the end of the Reception year, standards are just below those expected of children of their age, with writing skills being the weakest area.

The results of Key Stage 1 assessments in 2006 show that standards were well below average. Inspection findings, however, show that pupils make good progress and attain standards that were broadly average, though below average in writing. Pupils' results in the 2006 tests taken in Year 6 were above average. Standards in mathematics were above average and in science well above average. Standards in English were broadly average because standards in writing were lower than those in reading. Boys did not do as well as girls in English because more boys had learning difficulties relating to communication and writing skills. The school is addressing this issue. The school did well to exceed its challenging targets.

Looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because their learning and pastoral needs are identified and supported from an early stage.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of all pupils, including those with hearing impairments, is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. In the Foundation Stage, children extend their personal and social development and become good learners because staff plan stimulating activities. Pupils behave well, show courtesy and respect for others and share in many enrichment activities. Pupils enjoy lessons; they concentrate well and persevere when work proves to be difficult. Attendance is above average; pupils understand the need to come to school regularly and punctually. They explain why a healthy lifestyle such as regular exercise and a balanced diet is important. Pupils play together safely; they have a clear idea of what is right and wrong.

In lessons, and through the work of the school council, pupils learn how to become good citizens. Their basic skills and ability to work well together mean that they are well placed for the next stage of their education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and in the unit for pupils with hearing impairments. This is a significant factor in pupils' good progress. Children benefit from consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage, particularly in the way they are helped to become good learners. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise; they ensure that pupils know what they should be able to do by the

end of each lesson. Information gained from thoughtful questioning is used very effectively to check on learning and to plan challenging tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs and ability. Good teaching was exemplified in a literacy lesson in the Year 6 class. All pupils were captivated by the story of Macbeth. This high level of interest was capitalised on by the teacher to enable pupils to make good progress in writing in the style of newspaper reports.

Planning is good and linking learning in one subject to that in another subject is a growing feature. This is not always clear to the pupils however, and opportunities for them to take more responsibility for joining up what they are learning are missed, for example, in practising their writing skills. Interactive whiteboards are used very well to arouse interest and extend learning. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and contribute well to pupils' good progress in lessons. Marking usually makes clear to pupils what they have achieved, but infrequently indicates what pupils need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the pupils' different needs well. It is securely founded on personal and social education in order to promote good attitudes to learning,. Although the revised curriculum with strong links between subjects is not yet fully developed it is beginning to raise standards, especially through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The identification of weaknesses in pupils' writing has led to innovative intervention strategies. These are successfully accelerating pupils' progress. Good quality reading resources are promoting strongly a love of reading and so helping raise standards. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and has a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional development.

There is a good range of educational activities that enrich the curriculum, especially in creative subjects and sport, often drawing on expertise from outside the school. The introduction of French, instrumental music and more opportunities to discuss their work are making good contributions to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. This is important for all pupils, especially for those with impaired hearing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils benefit from learning in a safe and calm atmosphere supported by a strong team of dedicated teachers, teaching assistants and ancillary staff. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and teachers deal with it very quickly. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place. Good guidance is provided regarding living safely and healthily. Skilled teachers and teaching assistants give very good support to pupils with hearing impairment, looked after children and those with other learning and behavioural difficulties. For example, in assemblies those who do not hear as well as others are fully included through the provision of specialist equipment and sign language. The quality of support for able and talented pupils is not yet developed to the same level, so a few pupils are not aware of their capabilities.

Good communication with parents gives them good opportunities to provide informed support for their children at home. Effective links with other schools ease pupils' transition to the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The unit for hearing impaired pupils is well led and managed. The acting headteacher provides good, determined leadership. She has the full support of all staff in her drive to raise standards by creating a caring environment in which every child matters and thrives. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing. The school's development plan and the action plans of subject leaders identify which areas of provision need further development. However, they do not have a sharp enough focus on how these actions will raise standards. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in provision and standards in art and design, physical education, geography and ICT. Teachers and teaching assistants are deployed well and very well for pupils who have hearing impairment or other barriers to learning. Support is directed to the exact level of pupils' needs, promoting progress and encouraging independence.

The views of parents and pupils are sought and acted on appropriately, such as the pupils' suggestions for additional play equipment and seating for the playground. The governors, several of whom are recent appointments, fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. They support the school well and are becoming more confident about challenging the school.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

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?	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.

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	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	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Bransty Primary School

Mona Road

Bransty

Whitehaven

Cumbria

CA28 6EG

19 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school and for your help during the school's recent inspection. We thought you were well behaved, polite, courteous, and worked hard in your lessons.

We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about the school. You are in a good school where all the staff work hard to help you to do your best. You told us that you liked your school and enjoy your lessons as well as clubs and visits. You know a lot about staying safe and being healthy from your work in school.

The displays of your work are good; particularly the art displays. You take part in a lot of exciting activities which help you to learn about the world. You thoroughly enjoy the assemblies and it was really good to see how those of you who do not hear as well as others are included through the specialist equipment and sign language.

The teachers have the right ideas about what to do to improve. We have asked the school to help you to do better in your writing and to ensure that you know what you need to do to improve your work.

It was a pleasure to visit your school. Keep working hard so that you continue to do well.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison

Lead Inspector