



Brassington Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112515
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289306
Inspection date 18 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Patricia Cox

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Brassington
School category	Community		Matlock
Age range of pupils	4-11		Derbyshire DE4 4HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01629540212
Number on roll (school)	0	Fax number	01629 540212
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr.David Brown
		Headteacher	Mrs. Sarah Lee
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The pupils in this very small school are almost all of White British heritage and all have English as their first language. The proportion entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average but the proportion identified as having learning difficulties is similar to the national average. They are from a range of home backgrounds, mostly from the village but some from further afield. A much higher proportion than nationally either leave before finishing Year 6 or join after the first admission for Reception children. There are about 20% more boys than girls in the school. The children's attainment when they enter the Reception class is similar to national expectations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides its pupils with an exceptional standard of education, giving excellent value for money. The children do very well in Reception, building rapidly on their skills and knowledge. There continues to be an accelerated rate of progress through the whole school, so that by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are very high in English, mathematics and science. Standards are not quite as high in science at the end of Year 2 and in writing at the end of Year 6, although they are above average. The pupils' achievement is exceptional overall. Teaching is tremendous; teachers work very hard to make the work exciting and involving, using a wide range of strategies, including role play and information and communication technology (ICT). They plan enjoyable activities very carefully, to cater for the range of age and ability in their class. The pupils respond extremely well, often totally immersing themselves in the lesson and concentrating hard throughout. The school's curriculum is very special; it is designed exceedingly well to meet the pupils' needs, using the local area imaginatively and providing a wide range of enrichment. There is a strong focus on the creative subjects, and cross-curricular links which make the topics exciting and thoroughly enjoyable. As a result, pupils enjoy school very much, taking great pleasure in all that it provides. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good, and pervades the whole of what the school offers them. Therefore they behave extremely well, taking responsibility for their own behaviour and playing very cooperatively together. The older pupils play happily with the younger ones, taking good care of them. Because the curriculum provides many opportunities to learn about the world, they are especially well informed about their own and different cultures. Attendance is well above the national picture. Pupils are developing an extremely good range of skills that will help them to become good citizens, such as teamwork and a very good understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Care for the pupils is excellent; all health and safety requirements are met well and the pupils are looked after very well if they have a bump or fall. The school has excellent systems for checking that they are making as much progress as they could and for making arrangements to support those who need additional help to meet their challenging targets. All the areas of the school work so well because the headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management. She has particularly good systems for ensuring that she knows which areas need to be improved and for planning to bring about change, although the school's evaluation of itself is rather modest. The staff and governors provide good support, managing their responsibilities well. All in the school have a determination to achieve and maintain the highest standards, and have made good strides since the previous inspection. There is, therefore, exceedingly good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils make the same progress in science in the infants and writing in the juniors as they do in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Since 2001, standards have been above average, often exceptionally high, and on a rising trend at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. From their average starting point on entry to Reception, children make very rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well in almost all areas, often exceeding the challenging targets set. However, achievement, although good, is not as pronounced in science at the end of Year 2 and writing at the end of Year 6. The school has already started to tackle standards in writing and this is having an evident impact among the younger pupils but this has not yet had a major impact among the oldest ones. Nevertheless, there is some very powerful writing emerging from Years 5 and 6, as a result of inspirational teaching which fires their imaginations, through topics such as 'The Wreck of the Zanzibar'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school provides exceptional support for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development, but spirituality is less pervasive. Respect and consideration are central to its work and all adults are consistent in expecting the best behaviour and effort. As a result, almost all pupils are polite, thoughtful and sensible in class and around the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are very pleasant social occasions and pupils are often imaginative in the use they make of play equipment. They report that if there are any fallings out or, very occasionally, bullying, these are dealt with rapidly and effectively. Because the curriculum provides pupils with so many opportunities to learn about their own and different cultures, their cultural development is particularly good. Personal and social education provides pupils with a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. There are high quality healthy lunches and most pupils take advantage of them. The school works at the heart of its small community, and through their involvement, pupils develop very good life skills that support them in becoming good citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers use a range of imaginative strategies to stimulate and engage their pupils, so that topics that could be dull come alive. For example, the class for the Reception children and Year1/2 pupils took on the role of designers, in costume, to plan the spaceships for their imaginative aliens. They were totally absorbed in the activity, and the staff used questioning very well to make pupils think, to bring out their own ideas and develop rich language. The play activities for the Reception children were ingenious and closely linked to the topic. Excellent relationships in all three classes ensure that

lessons move on smoothly. Work is carefully planned to meet the needs of the full range of age and ability in the class, although the more able occasionally do not get the challenging tasks they need at an early enough stage. Pupils respond extremely well; they are attentive and eager to answer. They settle to work quickly and try very hard and enthusiastically to do their best. Marking is thorough and helps pupils to know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This outstanding curriculum is matched very well to the pupils' needs, using the wealth of natural resources in the locality. With up to four year-groups in each class, very careful and precise planning has been necessary so that pupils build on their skills year on year and there is very good attention to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Teachers choose the books on which they base their topics with a very specific focus on how well they will support the planning of the whole curriculum in an original way. Central to this planning are the creative arts, so that the pupils have a thorough grounding in art and design, music and drama. The curriculum is enriched by an outstanding range of visits and visitors, with a wealth of clubs and activities outside school hours. The use of very good links with other institutions ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged because of the very limited accommodation, particularly the lack of a hall large enough for gymnastics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All health and safety procedures are established very well and reviewed regularly. Procedures for child protection are thorough and clear. All necessary checks have been carried out on staff and governors. Very good care is taken of pupils and rare accidents are dealt with appropriately and recorded. Support and guidance for their academic progress are excellent. Challenging targets are set for their achievement and the tracking systems are used very effectively to check regularly that they are making the expected progress. The school has extremely good strategies for intervening to ensure that each pupil does their best.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides a very ambitious, and successful, educational direction for the school, focused on the best possible achievement and maintenance of high standards. In spite of her heavy teaching load, she checks the quality of the school's work rigorously and knows precisely where improvement is needed. Information about how well classes are doing is used to pinpoint where there are particular shortcomings. Planning for improvement is thorough and action is very effective, so that weaknesses in writing have been identified and are being tackled. Staff, all of whom work part-time, manage their many subjects well, planning coverage carefully and monitoring to ensure

that standards are high enough. Governors fulfil their role very well, with a good knowledge of provision and where improvements are needed. They check that standards are being maintained and that plans are on course. There is outstanding teamwork. The school works closely with parents, who are rightly very positive about what the school provides.

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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?	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	1
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	1
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?	1
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.

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

19 September 2006 Dear children Brassington Primary School, School Hill, Brassington, Matlock, Derbyshire. DE4 4HB Thank you very much for the way in which you made me feel so welcome in your school yesterday. I enjoyed talking to you so much, because you are so interesting and polite. I want to tell you what I found out about your school while I was there. I think you're very lucky to go to such a good school. You do really well there and are very good at English and mathematics, but I think the younger children could do a bit better in science, which is a subject that the older children learn very well. The older ones need to improve their writing, which I know they are already trying to do. Your teachers work very hard to make your lessons as interesting as possible and so you enjoy the activities and try to do your very best. The topics you do are really exciting, so you join in well in lessons and concentrate on your work. I really enjoyed watching the younger children designing their aliens' spaceships - they wanted to go on all day! You have lots of visitors, and you go to many interesting places, and this makes your learning much more fun. I hope you enjoyed your visit to the Black Country Museum today. You were right when you said that the school takes very good care of you. Your teachers make sure that you get help if you need it and that you grow up to be sensible and to do things for yourselves. So your behaviour is excellent and you get on with each other and the staff really well. Mrs Lee and all the staff are always planning new ways to help you to do your very best and to learn as much about the world as you can. Congratulations - you work very hard and enjoy it, because you go to a great school. My best wishes for the future; I'm sure you'll all do really well. Mrs Pat Cox Lead inspector