



Brackensdale Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112737
Local Authority City of Derby
Inspection number 289390
Inspection dates 9–10 October 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Cogher

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Walthamstow Drive
School category	Community		Mackworth Estate, Mackworth Estate
Age range of pupils	3–7		Derby DE22 4BS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332 348314
Number on roll (school)	187	Fax number	01332 367078
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs J Dean
		Headteacher	Mrs D Reddish
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2006		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–7	9–10 October 2006	289390

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school in the area of Mackworth on the outskirts of Derby. The school has achieved the Healthy School Standard and the Investors in People award. A well above average number of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. This is because the school is an Enhanced Resource school and caters for a well above average number of pupils with statements of special educational need. Their needs are varied but the largest numbers of pupils within this group are autistic or have a language disorder or moderate learning difficulties. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and speak English as their first language. No pupils require support for learning English as a second language. An above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school works productively with local schools and outside agencies to support and extend pupils' learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where all pupils make effective progress and achieve well. Good improvement has been secured since the last inspection and the school is in a good position to improve further. The school provides good value for money. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is supported well by all staff and governors. They share a clear vision for the future improvement of the school and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Almost all parents consider the school does a very good job and support it well. Staff work effectively as a team and there is a very positive feel to the school. Good relationships within the school enable governors to fulfil their role well and hold the school to account for its work. Procedures to check the quality of the work of the school are rigorous and improvements are quickly and consistently implemented. This collective approach to school improvement needs to be applied to raising the standard of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Staff are very self-critical and, in some cases, too modest in judging their work. Standards on entry to the school's nursery are well below those expected overall. They are low in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have complex needs and an often very low level of development when they enter the school. Good teaching in the special facility and in the main school from the nursery to Year 2 ensures that all pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their individual abilities. They make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills and are keen to take on responsibilities and contribute to school improvement. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well but remain below that expected by Year 2. This slows the pace of their learning in all subjects, as they often struggle to understand words and ideas and have difficulty in expressing their views. Standards are low by Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. This good provision continues in Years 1 and 2. Teachers know their pupils well and make good use of assessment information to plan lessons that help pupils develop their knowledge and skills by building successfully on what they already know and can do. Good use is made of information and communication technology to motivate pupils and the variety of activities provided in lessons interest them and support their enthusiasm for learning. The curriculum is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils of all abilities. At times this level of support prevents pupils from developing their independent learning skills. Exceptionally good care, guidance and support are provided for all pupils. The school works extremely productively with parents, other schools and outside agencies to secure the best possible provision in school for individuals and groups of pupils. Attendance is satisfactory. The school works very hard to raise attendance levels and recent figures show improvement. Pupils feel safe and develop trusting relationships with the adults in school. In this positive environment pupils develop good attitudes to learning and work hard to achieve their personal targets.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening so that standards in reading, writing and mathematics improve. - Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills so that a greater number of activities are planned that do not require adult support.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards in Year 2 are low when compared to national averages. However, these overall results are affected by the high proportion of pupils at the school with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with statements of special educational need. School-based information provides a more accurate picture of standards and the progress made by pupils as individuals. Many children start in the nursery with standards that are very low compared to those expected for their age. They make good progress in the nursery and reception. Despite this progress most children do not achieve all the expected goals by the end of their reception year. However, they are confident, have good attitudes towards their work and are keen to learn. Pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1 and Year 2 and achieve the challenging targets they are set. This is the case for pupils of all abilities in the school, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with statements of special educational need. Some pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. However, their speaking and listening skills remain below those expected and this slows the progress they make in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school provides a calm and happy environment in which pupils feel valued. They enjoy their time at school, although their limited speaking and listening skills make it hard for them to effectively share their enthusiasm and learning with others. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and particularly enjoy being active at playtime. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and they behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. Pupils make an effective contribution to the school and the wider community through the work of the school council and their involvement in local events and fundraising for charity. These activities and their hard work in lessons ensure that pupils develop the skills that will support their future success in the next stage of their education and later working lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective management of pupils result in good relationships and a calm atmosphere in lessons. Consequently, pupils develop the confidence to work hard to achieve their targets. Teachers are skilled at providing a mixture of activities that enable pupils who learn in different ways to systematically build on their previous learning. For example, some activities are practical, while others require pupils to listen or look carefully. In all classes the range of pupils' ability is wide and great care is taken to plan work that is at the right level for pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively as a team to support all pupils in their learning. At times too much adult support is given and more could be done to improve pupils' ability to work and learn independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, although more links could be made between subjects to allow pupils to apply their skills in different contexts. The school's approach is flexible and the curriculum is well organised to take account of the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs. The range of learning activities for children in the Foundation Stage is stimulating and provides them with a good start to their education. Pupils of all abilities benefit from a good range of enrichment activities. These activities broaden pupils' experiences of the ethnically diverse world outside their homes and school and also contribute well to their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

A very strong emphasis is placed on nurturing and developing each pupil as an individual. Pupils are very well cared for and receive high quality support and guidance. Developing pupils' personal and social skills and fostering in pupils a love of learning are high priorities for the school. Pupils' individual needs are often complex but they are identified promptly and effective support is provided. Systems for checking how well pupils are doing are robust and teachers are quick to modify the support they provide so that all pupils learn well and enjoy their time at school. An extremely close working partnership with parents and a wide range of outside support agencies ensure that pupils who need very specific support get the extra help they need. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are rigorous and consistently implemented.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are effective. The headteacher, all staff and governors are exceptionally committed to ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can. They work hard to make this a reality for pupils and are very self-critical. Systems for checking the quality of the school's work are good and rigorous. Teamwork and high expectations of what pupils can achieve are very strong features of the school and underpin the effectiveness of the quality of education it provides. Staff are quick to respond to the information gathered and implement agreed changes consistently. Whilst pupils' speaking and listening skills have been recognised as an area for improvement in all subjects, a whole school approach has yet to be developed to remedy this situation.

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?	1
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	4
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	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	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?	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?	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	2
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

11 October 2006 Dear Children Brackensdale Infant School, Walthamstow Drive, Mackworth Estate, Derby, DE22 4BS Thank you very much for being so friendly and making us feel welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you at lunchtime and during your lessons. We think you behave well and work hard. Well done. You like your lessons and all the extra things teachers plan for you to do like going out of school on trips. You think your school is good and we agree with you. Your teachers keep a close check on how well you are doing. They tell you what you need to do to get better and give you extra help if you need it. Sometimes they help you when you could do your work on your own. We have asked your teachers to let you make more choices and take decisions about your work so that you can learn by yourselves. Many of you find it difficult to talk about your work and the things you enjoy doing, and to understand what people are saying to you. The adults in school teach you many things but we have asked them to assist you even more effectively to get better at speaking and listening, reading, writing and number work. With the help of all the staff and governors Mrs Reddish runs the school well. All the adults at school think every one of you is very special and they want all of you to do as well as you can and enjoy your time at school. They look after you extremely well and try very hard to help all of you feel happy and safe in school. Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. Keep working hard and enjoy your time at Brackensdale Infant School. Mrs Alison Cogher Lead inspector