



Bromsgrove, Finstall First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116660
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290582
Inspection dates 5–6 October 2006
Reporting inspector Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	First	School address	Carnforth Road
School category	Community		Bromsgrove
Age range of pupils	4–9		B60 2HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 872938
Number on roll (school)	300	Fax number	01527 836448
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Terry O'Reilly
		Headteacher	Stuart Evans
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2001		

Age group 4–9	Inspection dates 5–6 October 2006	Inspection number 290582
-------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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

Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Children enter the school with skills and experiences that are above the expected levels. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at times other than the start of the school year. The new headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Finstall First is a good school. Standards are very high and pupils achievement is good. Pupils' personal development is good and thrives in the school's friendly and purposeful atmosphere. The staff work tirelessly to ensure pupils do well and as a result achievement is good. Pupils really enjoy school and their behaviour is good. Pupils feel very safe at school and are very safety conscious. They talk proudly about their charity work and the role of the school council, which are developing their good sense of community. Pupils clearly understand the need to be healthy but do not consistently put this knowledge into practice. Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school and rightly think that the pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Typically they say 'My child is happy at school, makes good progress and is well looked after'.

Teaching is good overall although it is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. This means that children in the Reception classes make sound, rather than good, progress and that provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Nearly all children reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year and a significant minority exceed them. Progress is accelerated in Years 1 to 4 where the teaching is good and as a result standards are very high.

Teachers manage lessons and behaviour well. They capture and maintain pupils' interest effectively and relationships with adults are good. As a result, pupils are keen to learn. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows and opportunities are missed to probe pupils' understanding and extend their thinking through the use of well-judged questions. In the Reception classes, teachers do not consistently provide children with the guidance they need to make the most of the wide range of activities planned for them. The good curriculum makes an important contribution to pupils' enjoyment of learning and good achievement through its creative and imaginative approaches. Pupils talk excitedly about the visitors to school who bring to life subjects such as history.

Leadership and management are good. Rigorous self-evaluation ensures the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. These effective procedures stem from the detailed checking of the school's performance by senior management. Weaknesses, such as the poor computer provision at the time of the last inspection, have been effectively rectified. The recently appointed headteacher has correctly identified the need to develop the roles of subject leaders so that they can take fuller responsibility for raising achievement in their subjects. Improvements since the last inspection and the recent records of improvement show the school has good capacity to make further gains. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress of children in Reception by ensuring that teachers provide better guidance to support children's learning.
- Ensure that teachers make effective use of questions and increase the pace of learning in all lessons so that pupils are fully stretched.

- Fully involve subject coordinators in checking the pupils' progress to sharpen their understanding of what needs to be done to raise achievement further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achievement, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few children in the early stages of learning English, is good overall. Most pupils make good progress and standards are very high. Children settle quickly into the Reception classes and make good strides in their personal development and their understanding of shape and number. Children's skills of linking letters and with sounds are relatively weaker. In general, children do not receive enough direction and guidance from staff to raise their overall progress beyond satisfactory.

In Years 1 to 4, standards are very high. In written work, pupils' spelling and punctuation are accurate and they have very well developed skills when writing in different contexts and for a variety of audiences. When reading, pupils have an outstanding appreciation of the different styles of literature. In mathematics, they show advanced skills in solving problems and mental arithmetic, but their understanding of fractions is a relative weakness. When work lacks pace or when pupils are not stretched sufficiently by the teacher's questions, their progress is not as assured although it remains satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils respect and value each other and the world around them. Their good behaviour comes from a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' appreciation of their place in a multicultural society is well developed.

Pupils report no bullying and are confident in approaching a member of staff if they have a worry and say their concerns are quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to maintain healthy lifestyles and do their best to keep fit through taking regular exercise. They are clear about the pitfalls of a poor diet but many do not choose a healthy lunch box. Pupils' skilful use of computers, together with high standards in English and mathematics, ensure good preparation for their future economic well-being. Robust and effective measures have maintained above average attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers in Reception plan a good range of activities for children and lessons are a hive of activity. However, children require more direction and guidance when

undertaking activities so that they can make better progress. In particular, adults do not always ensure that children make the most of the opportunities to learn through structured play.

In Years 1 to 4, teachers' plans are well matched to pupils' learning needs. They know what they expect pupils to learn and their explanations are clear. As a result, pupils are confident about tackling their work and try hard in lessons. Class debates are lively, but questions are not always used effectively to check pupils' understanding and to extend their ideas. The pace of some lessons slows when teachers talk for too long. Teaching assistants are generally well briefed and make a particularly valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad and balanced curriculum meets statutory requirements. It supports pupils' personal development well. There are good resources to support children's learning in Reception. However, the outside play area is underused because essential building work is not complete, which restricts the learning activities. In Years 1 to 4, all subjects concentrate on developing pupils' literacy skills and contribute to the high standards in English. The most able pupils are provided for well with appropriate extension work. Regular visits to places of interest and a good range of popular clubs extend pupils' interests and aspirations well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, support and guidance to pupils. Sensitive support and care is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or medical problems. This enables these pupils to participate fully in lessons and make good progress. The school is making good use of external agencies and specialists to promote the welfare of vulnerable children when the need arises. The few pupils in the early stages of learning English are given very effective support so that they can contribute fully in lessons. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are robust.

Procedures to assess pupils' work and track their progress are good. Pupils are meeting the challenging targets set for them. However, older pupils are not always clear as to what their academic targets are, which limits the opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning. The school provides very effective additional support, through booster classes and individual help, for individual pupils who underperform.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management have ensured that pupils' standards have been maintained at a high level for an extended period. High expectations for pupils'

academic and personal development are communicated effectively to staff so that everyone strives to do their very best for the pupils.

The school's clear view of its strengths and areas for development stem from the rigorous checking of the school's performance by senior managers. Weaknesses have been tackled tenaciously. For example, assessment procedures have been improved enormously since the last inspection as a result of well-judged action taken by the school. Strategic planning identifies the right priorities for attention and the school is well placed to get even better.

The recently appointed headteacher is perceptive and has made a good start. He has correctly identified the need to ensure that effective monitoring and evaluation extend beyond senior staff. At present, the work of subject coordinators is satisfactory but requires improvement. Their procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing their subjects are not always sufficiently rigorous and this restricts their impact on raising pupils' achievement further.

School governance is good. Governors are well informed through regular visits. Their good understanding of data enables them to support and challenge the school on its performance effectively.

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.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	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	3
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	1
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	3
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	2
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. You clearly enjoy being in a school in which you all get on so well and help each other. We enjoyed our conversations with you about your work and the other things that you do at school. The school provides you with a good education.

Here are some of the 'highlights'

- You really enjoy your learning and work hard for your teachers.
- You are well behaved.
- You have a very interesting range of lessons and clubs which most of you attend.
- All the staff care for you very well.
- The youngest children settle well into Reception, and you make good progress as you move up the school and reach very high standards.
- The school's leadership is good and your new headteacher has made a good start.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help the youngest children to learn more when they play.
- Make sure your teachers' questions and the rate you work at fully stretch you in all lessons.
- Ensure that those teachers with responsibilities for subjects regularly check on the work that you do.

How you can help to improve the school

- Improve your diet at breaks and lunchtime by making better use of your good understanding of healthy eating.

Best wishes for your future and the future of the school.