



Bursley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124107
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292890
Inspection date 21 February 2007
Reporting inspector Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bursley Way
School category	Community		Bradwell
Age range of pupils	4–11		Newcastle ST5 8JQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 297716
Number on roll (school)	317	Fax number	01782 297717
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Trevor Hambleton
		Headteacher	Steve Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	21 February 2007	292890

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools and serves an area of mixed housing. The school is popular and oversubscribed. About half of the pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than in most schools. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. On entry to the Reception class, children's attainment is below the level expected for 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

This is a good school. It is popular with both parents and pupils. As one parent said, 'It is a friendly school where children are extremely happy to attend'. As a result of strong leadership and management, all major aspects of the school's provision are good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Pupils achieve well. They reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6. Against this positive background, there are some inconsistencies in pupils' achievement. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not always make the same good progress as pupils do in other parts of the school. Standards are average in Year 2 and pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. This is recognised by the school and strategies have been implemented to bring about improvements in teaching and the monitoring of pupils' progress. At this point, it is too early to judge whether they have been successful or not.

Pupils do well overall because the large majority of teaching is good or better. Most lessons are well organised, conducted at a good pace and learning is fun. On the rare occasion when teaching is less effective, learning is too slow and pupils are not so interested in their work. Most pupils enjoy their activities and remark that, for example, 'we have to work hard but the teachers try and make things straightforward and fun.' Pupils receive learning targets in English and mathematics. At present this process is used inconsistently by teachers, often found confusing by pupils and is not contributing significantly to improving achievement.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class as a result of effective provision. The school provides pupils of all ages with a good curriculum that is enhanced well by a wide range of extra activities, visits and visitors. The good range of additional activities is appreciated by the pupils and well attended. Activities vary from birdwatching at lunchtime to more physical activities after school that, in the words of one pupil, 'help you get a healthy lifestyle'.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good and are reflected in the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, whether as prefects who 'help people and sort out problems' or crushing aluminium cans as part of the school's re-cycling programme. Many pupils show maturity beyond their years and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils enter school in the morning with bright, alert faces and raring to go. The pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school is reflected in levels of attendance that are above the national average. Their delight at being at school was summarised by one pupil who said, 'I hate getting out of bed in the morning, but once I'm here, it's fantastic.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards at the end of Year 2, particularly in writing.
- Ensure consistent setting of learning targets in English and mathematics which pupils understand and which contribute positively to their achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good so that by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The needs of higher-attaining pupils are met well and they make good progress as a result. In the 2006 national tests, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 was above than the national average in all three subjects.

Children join the Reception class with skills and understanding below the expected levels for their age. They achieve well so that by the time they are ready to join Year 1, their attainment is average. Progress through Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In the 2006 assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap between reading, mathematics and writing in the school is wider than found nationally and very few pupils achieve the higher Level 3 in writing.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress. This is a result of the school's effective and well-organised provision, which is used as an example of good practice within the local authority.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are rightly proud of their school and very enthusiastic about all that it has to offer. They understand why school meals have become more healthy and are keen to eat the healthy snacks and fresh fruit available. They sensibly recognise why they are not allowed to bring snacks such as crisps and fizzy drinks for morning break. Pupils make good contributions to the school and wider community. The well-organised school council makes important decisions such as providing a playground 'friendship bench' to support pupils who need a friend at break times or purchasing a can crusher as part of being an Eco-friendly school. The gardening club plants flowers in the community to support local involvement in the 'Britain in Bloom' competition and the pupils successfully support a number of charities. The pupils play and work together sensibly and move around the school safely. They have a good understanding of the importance of teamwork, which, together with good literacy and numeracy skills, prepares them well for the next phase of their education and future lives.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. By the time they leave school they have developed into mature young citizens who are well aware of their responsibilities to others. This was shown, for example, as they sensitively listened and participated in an assembly about the history of slavery.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the vast majority of lessons, pupils concentrate well and develop good work habits. Relationships are good and teachers know what each pupil needs to do to get better. This was emphasised by one parent who commented, 'teachers make time to ensure that every pupil matters'. Pupils take a full part in class discussions and are not afraid to ask questions or admit when they do not understand something. They are actively encouraged to assess their own work and most do this confidently. The use of 'setting' in English and mathematics through the school enables teachers to carefully match work to pupils' abilities. Occasionally, the match of teaching to needs is not rigorous enough, particularly in Years 1 and 2 because, despite the 'setting,' the ability range in some groups can still be quite wide. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning through their effective support of small groups or individual pupils. Learning targets are not yet making a significant contribution to pupils' learning and progress. Some of them are written in language that is not easily understood by pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2, and they are not used consistently throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the differing needs of pupils and enables them to achieve well through most of the school. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has improved significantly since the school's last inspection and there is good provision to provide extra support for pupils who are good at English and mathematics. The school is looking to add French to the curriculum later in the academic year and is working towards ensuring that pupils get the recommended two hours for physical education. Resources for information and communication technology are good and used effectively by teachers to support pupils' learning. The school acknowledges that there is a need to develop the curriculum links between Reception and Year 1 to help the transition between these two year groups and the children's participation in more formal learning. At present this is a factor preventing pupils' performance in writing from being better in Years 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school works effectively to ensure that pupils work and play in a safe and secure environment. Health and safety, child protection and safeguarding of pupils requirements are fully in place. Staff have a good awareness of their responsibilities for the well-being of the pupils. Good attendance and punctuality are promoted well. Pupils state that they are well cared for and feel safe. For example, rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and pupils are sure there is someone they can turn to if they have any worries or concerns. The school has strong links with external agencies

to support pupils and parents and regularly participates in schemes such as the Staffordshire Healthy Schools initiative and 'Travelwise' road safety project.

There is a strong emphasis in the school on supporting individual needs. Pupils are kept well informed about how well they are doing through clear and precise marking of their work. There are times, however, when pupils are not given enough information on how to improve their performance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Pupils do well at the school because strong leadership and management promote effective provision. The headteacher ensures that the school readily participates in local and national initiatives that enable it to benefit from additional resources and expertise. One parent observed that the school always continues to develop and improve. This is an accurate picture. Since the school was last inspected, the headteacher, governors and senior staff have continued to improve the school's resources and accommodation whilst maintaining above-average standards and good achievement. On this evidence the school has a good capacity to improve further.

There are good procedures to monitor the school's overall effectiveness. Prompt action is taken when necessary and the deputy head is further improving the amount of data that is collected on individual pupils so that the school is in an even better position to provide individual support to pupils who might not be doing as well as they could be. A few subject co-ordinators are new to their posts and are still developing their roles. The school recognises that their positions require further development. Governance is good. Governors support the school well and have a clear understanding of the school's priorities for development, particularly in terms of improving pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2.

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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

I really enjoyed visiting your school to see how well you are doing. I promised many of you that I would let you know what I found out about the school.

I agree with those of you who told me that you go to a good school. Your teachers help you to make good progress. As a result, by the time you leave Year 6, you achieve standards that are above average. Sometimes, pupils in Year 1 and 2 do not learn as quickly as the older pupils so I have asked the school to make sure that everyone makes good progress all the time. I have also asked the school to improve the use of your learning targets so they help you learn even more.

You all enjoy your learning and are very well behaved. It was good to see you all getting on so well with each other. The prefects do a good job and the adults make sure you are safe at school and well cared for. The adults in charge of the school do a good job. The school provides a good range of extra things for you to do at lunchtime and after school. I was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm of the lunchtime 'twitchers' which, as I am sure you know, is another name for the birdwatchers.