



Barnfields Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124167
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292912
Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Don Mason

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lansdowne Way
School category	Community		Wildwood, off Cannock Road
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stafford ST17 4RD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01785 356356
Number on roll (school)	296	Fax number	01785 356360
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	G Richards
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006	Inspection number 292912
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The great majority of pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. A nursery class for 13 pupils was opened in September 2006. Children enter the nursery with average standards. The headteacher was appointed in April 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and pupils appreciate the changes the new headteacher has made, particularly the introduction of the popular weekly 'achievements' assembly. The new nursery is already having a very positive impact on children's development. Children enter the nursery with average standards. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, with strengths in the nursery and in personal and social development overall. However, the provision for the children's outdoor education is inadequate. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory and standards, as shown in Year 2 and Year 6 national tests, are good. The underachievement of recent years in English, particularly in writing, has been remedied through improved teaching and clearly targeted support. The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding and is satisfactory overall. The school recognises that higher-attaining pupils do not always make the progress they should. The school is taking action to remedy this by making use of improved assessment information to plan lessons and provide work which matches the needs of pupils of all abilities more effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in reading because of the support of well-qualified teaching assistants. The curriculum is satisfactory and well enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and sporting activities.

Attendance is good. Pupils are proud of their school. They like their teachers and relationships in school are very good. Pupils' enjoyment of school is good. They behave well and are cooperative in class. However, their enjoyment sometimes dips and they can become unresponsive if they have to listen for too long or if work does not challenge them appropriately. Their personal development and well-being are good and are reflected in the way pupils grow in self-confidence in the safe and secure environment which the staff provide for them. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Procedures to provide good academic guidance for pupils are in place but too new as yet to have had an impact on pupils' learning. Pupils, particularly in Year 6, have many opportunities to make a good contribution to the school and local community. The staff work together very well as a team. The new headteacher has successfully reorganised the management structure of the school and all staff are committed to raising standards. However, senior staff have had too few opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in the school. They are looking forward to developing their leadership roles by taking full advantage of the new opportunities being provided for them by the headteacher.

Governors' support for the school is satisfactory. Their involvement in the appointment of the new headteacher has enhanced their ability to help the school in its efforts to move forward. The school's capacity to improve is good. Recent improvements in the progress made by higher-attaining pupils, and in writing generally, are an indication of this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school to the level of the best, particularly the provision for higher-attaining pupils.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning by all senior staff.
- Improve the quality of outdoor learning opportunities for the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards, as seen in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests, are above average. Children start school with average levels of attainment and make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 to achieve above-average standards at the end of Year 2. The school recognises the need to improve further the achievement of higher-attaining pupils and the achievement of boys in writing. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 make satisfactory and improving progress. The rate of progress picks up in Year 6 so that, with carefully targeted support, pupils reach above-average standards by the end of the year. In recent years there has been significant underachievement in writing, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. The latest test results and other inspection evidence show that this situation has been remedied. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve at least as well as other pupils. The school accepts that it needs to use its improved assessment information to set more challenging targets based on higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay fit, healthy and safe and are very complimentary about the new school meals menu, commenting that they get chips once a week because 'that's OK.' Pupils are also positive that any problems they have will be sorted out, adding that there were 'consequences for bullies.' Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they benefit from additional, practical road safety sessions where they get marked on their safety consciousness. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, reflected in their growing knowledge and understanding of school systems in other European countries and in the calm manner in which they go about their work. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities, particularly in Year 6. These pupils speak with pride about their duties. For example, they readily and with a good level of authority for their age support younger children in the playground with their 'Huff and Puff' activities.

Pupils' influence on how their school is run is satisfactory. A school council is in place but its influence on school development is quite small. Pupils' progress in attaining skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and in English and mathematics prepares them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. The

school's efforts to improve the pupils' speaking and listening skills and ability to work in teams are progressing well, which will serve them well in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and improving as teachers make better use of assessment information to plan to meet the needs of all pupils. Progress in writing is improving as teachers explain more effectively how pupils can improve their work. Teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to talk about their activities and to work in pairs and groups, and this is beginning to result in pupils becoming more enthusiastic writers. However, some aspects of teaching need to be improved; for example, in too many lessons pupils of all abilities are given the same task to do with the result that some find it too easy and some too difficult.

Pupil-teacher relationships are good. Pupils behave well and clear routines in classes ensure that pupils settle quickly to their work. Because of effective support from teachers' assistants, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make at least as much progress as other pupils. However, the best use is not always made of these staff, particularly when the teacher is talking to the whole class. The school rightly recognises the need to deal with the uneven quality of teaching and is already making improvements. The introduction of home-school diaries is providing a good means of communication between teachers and parents and this benefits pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum overall is satisfactory. Work in science and personal, social and health education promotes healthy lifestyles. Opportunities such as 'Save a Life' provided by the ambulance service and cycling proficiency enable pupils to stay safe. The redesigned curriculum is beginning to have an impact, enabling teachers to provide more interesting activities for pupils and developing the use of ICT, which has improved since the last inspection. There is satisfactory provision for those with learning difficulties or disabilities and the more able. A range of visits, visitors and community links enhances the opportunities open to children, for example, the visit of police officers with their patrol car. Links with sports clubs, instrumental lessons, visits and visitors enrich learning. The wide range of after-school clubs is well attended. The residential visit for Year 6 provides opportunities for pupils to learn and achieve success outside the classroom. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Teachers plan a good range of learning activities and children happily take part in these, but the surface and design of the outdoor classroom are unsatisfactory. This is having a negative impact on children's physical and creative development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with some strengths in pastoral care. The school has sound arrangements in place for child protection and health and safety to prevent bullying and to ensure children attend regularly. Pupils are confident that there are adults they can turn to if upset or worried. Pupils feel valued as a result of the school's welcoming atmosphere and attention to security.

Teaching assistants are often used well to support learning but this is not yet consistent across classes. Support and guidance for academic progress are satisfactory. The new tracking system effectively identifies those needing support and this is having an impact, especially in English. In the best lessons teachers explain what will be learnt so children understand what they are learning. Marking is variable, usually congratulatory rather than identifying ways to improve. The use of personal targets to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve is an improvement but is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. She has reorganised the management team and given staff new responsibilities. The result has been to give the staff a new sense of purpose and a focus on raising achievement. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the role. She recognises the need to provide opportunities for colleagues to monitor pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility. Staff with new management responsibilities appreciate the confidence the headteacher has placed in them and the high expectations she has of them. They value the opportunities to promote their leadership role and career development which the headteacher is providing for them. The headteacher's chief priorities have been to raise the achievement of higher-attaining pupils generally and all pupils' in writing. The latest test results for summer 2006 and other inspection evidence point to the school's success in these areas. This, the strong will of the staff and governors to succeed and the raised expectations in all aspects of the school's work provide evidence of the school's good capacity for improvement. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to support its work.

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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?	3
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	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing, and talking to you about your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We found that your school provides you with a sound education and that it is improving.

Good things about your school

- Your attendance is good. You behave well in school. Generally you enjoy your lessons and get on very well with your teachers.
- Your new headteacher is making changes which are improving the school.
- The staff work very well together as a team and take good care of you.
- You are beginning to enjoy your writing activities more and are making better progress in English as a result.
- The teachers are formally assessing your work more often and using the information to set work for you at the right level and to provide extra help if necessary.
- You all make satisfactory progress in your work and some of you make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Try to make sure that all the lessons are taught as well as the best ones.
- Give the senior teachers more opportunities to visit classes to see how you are progressing in the subjects they are responsible for.
- Improve the outdoor learning area for children in Nursery and Reception.

We wish you all the best for the future.