

Bell Lane Primary (J and I) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130965
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	293677
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Lyons
Headteacher	Mrs C Oldham
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2002
School address	Bell Lane Ackworth Pontefract West Yorkshire WF7 7JH
Telephone number	01977 722230
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area of some social and economic advantage in the large village of Ackworth. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals or from a minority ethnic group is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational need is below average. The school holds the ArtsMark, Investors in Pupils and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bell Lane is a satisfactory school. This judgement differs from the school's view that its overall effectiveness is good because some key aspects of leadership and management are not sufficiently developed. As a result, pupils could learn more quickly and standards could be higher. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards on entry to Nursery have been above average in recent years although previously they were broadly average. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and this satisfactory progress is continued across Years 1 to 6. Pupils at present leave Year 6 with broadly average standards. This represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Although some lessons are good, too many do not challenge pupils enough. This slows learning and holds back progress in English, mathematics and particularly science. It impacts especially on the performance of higher-attaining pupils. The school knows the levels at which its pupils are working because it has implemented a reliable system to track attainment. However, this system has only recently been introduced and information from it is not yet used to best effect by teachers throughout the school to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are fully met.

Personal development is good. Pupils are well cared for and as a result they are happy in school. There is a very positive atmosphere in the school built upon tolerance and respect for others. Pupils are given lots of encouragement to be good citizens and this reflects the very inclusive ethos that the school sustains within its local community.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with many good features. It offers pupils a very wide range of interesting topics to study. Art, music and French are particular strengths, and pupils say they like these subjects very much. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular enrichment activities which pupils enjoy, and in which large numbers engage.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The senior leadership group and all other staff are committed to doing their best for pupils. However, there is not a sufficiently clear view of how best to achieve this. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate. It is overly generous in key areas because senior leaders do not monitor pupils' performance with enough rigour. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a reasonable understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but without a clear view of success they are not fully effective. Some well founded strategies for improvement have been introduced recently, for example extending problem-solving work in mathematics, engaging in more investigative work in science and working on improving standards in writing. However, it is too soon for these to show their full effect. Most areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed although the monitoring of teaching remains an issue. Links with other education partners are strong and effective. Most parents have a positive view of the school. It has satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science.

- Improve the quality of teaching, including the use of assessment information, so that all pupils, and particularly higher attainers, make at least good progress.
- Ensure that leaders and managers rigorously monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning to obtain a clear view of the improvements required.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start the Foundation Stage with above the average levels of skills expected for their age. This has been the case for at least four years. Because teaching and provision are satisfactory, children make satisfactory progress and they start Year 1 with above average standards. These standards are reflected in pupils' results in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2. In earlier years, pupils started the Foundation Stage with broadly average standards and left Year 6 with average standards. This was the case with the Year 6 cohort in 2006 although only just so in science because pupils did not have enough opportunity to conduct their own investigations. Higher-attaining groups of pupils are not achieving to their full potential because teaching does not challenge them consistently enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and particularly like the creative, practical activities provided for them. Behaviour is good and pupils have good attitudes to their learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly and everyone gets on well together. During assemblies pupils really appreciate the personal qualities and achievements of others. Playground buddies and peer mediators are kind and considerate to younger pupils, ensuring that everyone has someone to play with and that they feel safe within the school environment. The school council contributes well to decision making and is pleased with its fundraising efforts towards the creation of an adventure playground for all pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of the wider community through their links with the local church, their musical performances and their fundraising events for charity. Pupils have a good understanding of staying safe, fit and healthy, and the good range of sporting activities and gardening club projects contribute well to this. They leave the school with personal and academic skills that prepare them satisfactorily for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While teaching is satisfactory overall, occasionally it is very good. In the most effective lessons, pupils are challenged to think for themselves, tasks are well matched to the learning needs of all ability groups, and the pace of learning is relentless. Moreover, pupils listen carefully and respond well, carrying out what is required of them. However, in lessons that are satisfactory overall, explanations are sometimes too long and the work set is not challenging enough, particularly for higher attainers. In these instances, progress is satisfactory for most but slow for some pupils. Teachers accurately assess the levels at which pupils are working and some use this information to set short-term targets which help pupils to improve rapidly. However this is not done systematically across the school. The marking of pupils' work is carried out

regularly and always acknowledges effort, but is often not specific enough in telling pupils what they have to do next to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy learning because of the good emphasis placed on work within the broader curriculum. Pupils like physical education, music and French, which is studied by all year groups. The quality of artwork, using a wide range of media, is very good, and provides a stimulating learning environment which celebrates pupils' successes well. The good range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors extend pupils' learning further and contribute effectively to their good personal development and enjoyment of learning. The programmes for literacy and numeracy result in satisfactory progress. However, too few challenges are provided for the most able.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously, and cares for its pupils well. All the necessary checks for ensuring pupils' care and welfare are in place and are carried out robustly. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Detailed and reliable records are kept to check on the progress that pupils are making. However, the information this generates is not yet used to best effect in setting challenging short-term targets for all pupils because the system is very new. The school gives good support to pupils through booster classes and after-school clubs as they move through the different stages of their education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given appropriate support from within school and from other agencies. This ensures that they make the same rate of progress as other pupils in the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is a calm and welcoming place which runs smoothly from day to day. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have complementary skills which drive a common philosophy, with particular strengths in securing good personal development and well-being for all pupils. However, the monitoring of teaching, learning and progress lacks challenge and rigour. All adults share a common philosophy of helping pupils to do as well as possible. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and work conscientiously to carry out their responsibilities. They have taken steps to put the school into a sound financial position. Some curriculum coordinators have a good understanding of how pupils are learning in their subject. They have recently begun to provide a more appropriate level of challenge about the progress pupils are making. This has enabled the school to introduce initiatives to raise standards of literacy and numeracy. However, the school lacks the general vision and skills of monitoring to make best use of these individual insights. The evaluation of the school's performance made by senior leaders is overly optimistic. It does not acknowledge that achievement is satisfactory rather than good and this then affects evaluations about the effectiveness of most other areas of the school.

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Annex A

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	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	3
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	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	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.

Annex A**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	4
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

On behalf of the inspection team I am writing to thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our conversations with you and these helped us to gain a good picture of the school. I am writing to let you all know what we found out.

We judge Bell Lane to be a satisfactory school. Lots of good things go on, and I will list some of them here.

- The adults take good care of you and you told us that they help you to feel safe. We were very impressed with the way you help each other.
- You behave really well in lessons, and listen carefully to what the teachers tell you. You told us that you enjoy being in school, and we could see that clearly.
- The school offers you lots of interesting lessons and activities and we thought the quality of your artwork on display around the school was very good.

We also found some things that could be done to help you make better progress and so we have asked the school to make sure that the following things happen.

- We want the school to improve the progress you make in English, mathematics and science.
- The school's managers should check much more carefully on how well you are learning in your English, mathematics and science lessons.
- Teachers should make sure that they set challenging work for all of you in every lesson.

This is going to mean that you will have to work at a good speed more consistently. We saw that you can work quickly in some of your lessons. We think it would be better for you if the school helped you to work quickly in all of them.