

Lower Fields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132182
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	293974
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under the Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	451
Day care	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mr J Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
Date of previous day care inspection	1 January 1900
School address	Fenby Avenue Bradford West Yorkshire BD4 8RG
Telephone number	01274 770312
Fax number	01274 770311

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The school was inspected by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school, located near to the centre of Bradford, is popular and oversubscribed. New building extensions are planned in the near future. About a third of the pupils are from minority ethnic families. A higher proportion than usual join or leave the school during the school year. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average and the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has recently gained an Investors in People award.

The school can provide out-of-school care for 24 children from 4 to 11 years of age. This provision was inspected as part of a pilot for Single Inspection Events.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has accurately judged itself to be satisfactory in most areas and good in some. It has largely succeeded in addressing previous areas of weakness but has not been totally successful in raising standards or developing the role of subject leaders so that they monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching effectively; nor has it managed to involve governors fully in helping to raise standards. Nevertheless, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

The Foundation Stage staff work well together to provide a worthwhile curriculum with a wide variety of exciting learning activities both indoors and outdoors in the spacious and well equipped area. The good quality of teaching and learning ensures that all children make good progress but because of their well below average skills on entry, few achieve the targets expected of them by the end of their Reception year.

By Year 2, overall standards are below average but most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. Standards by Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science but school data show that most of those who were attending the school in Year 2 make satisfactory or better progress.

Good relationships between home and school and pupils' good attitude towards their schoolwork are contributing effectively to pupils' good personal development and well-being. All have a good knowledge and understanding of different world religions through the well planned curriculum. Pupils' clearly enjoy being at school. Attendance is below average but improving as a result of school initiatives. High standards of behaviour are expected and children respond positively. Their behaviour and relationships with one another are good. The school has developed outstanding partnerships within the local community and these make a major contribution to the curriculum and to pupils' personal development.

The quality of teaching and learning varies considerably but overall, it is satisfactory. On the occasions where it is good or better, pupils make good progress. Teachers in some classes, however, do not have high enough expectations of pupils and as a result, pupils' progress suffers. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, especially for those who find learning difficult. Assessment procedures provide good information on the standards being reached and this information is used effectively to plan further work.

The support and guidance the school provides for all pupils is good. Parents showed how much they appreciate this in their very positive responses to the inspection questionnaire. Pupils are clear about their targets for learning in English, mathematics and science and these are reviewed regularly. Arrangements for child protection and the care of pupils are satisfactory, being similar in quality to those found in most other schools.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff monitor standards closely but are just beginning to develop their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to give them a clearer picture of strengths and priorities for improvement. The governing body is very supportive and keen to see standards and the quality of teaching improve. Governors' role in evaluating school effectiveness, however, is not sufficiently developed so they are not finding out for themselves where improvements could be made. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 1 and 2

- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning enabling pupils to make better progress
- Ensure that all staff and governors are involved in rigorously monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The effective management of provision in the Foundation Stage compensates well for the well below average starting point for most children. The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a consequence, children's achievement is good in all areas of learning. Most, however, do not attain the standards expected for their age by the end of their Reception year.

The most recent 2006 national test results for Year 6 pupils show a slight improvement in the school's overall performance but standards remained well below average in English, mathematics and science. The improving trend is set to continue in 2007. This is a good achievement given the high mobility of pupils and the short time that some have been in school. Inspection evidence and school assessment data show that over eight out of ten of the Year 6 pupils who attended the school since Year 2 make satisfactory or better progress. Overall standards for the current Year 6 pupils are below average with standards in science not improving as much as those in English and mathematics. Initiatives to improve English and mathematics have resulted in many more pupils being on track to achieve the expected level for their age. There has also been a small improvement in the number expected to achieve above average standards in these subjects. Standards in science remained well below average from 2005 to 2006. A greater emphasis on investigative work and pupils working together in pairs or groups has started to raise standards, especially for boys. They enjoy the practical approach. Most higher-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are helped to develop self-esteem from entry to the school and encouraged to have positive attitudes to their learning. Relationships with adults are good. Pupils respond well to the continuous support and guidance provided by all adults and as a result, behaviour is good and bullying rare so that they feel safe in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. They regularly celebrate the wide range of cultures represented in their school and in the wider community. Throughout the school, pupils learn to take responsibility. A group from Year 6 said: 'Doing jobs helps to make the school a better place.' Pupils enjoy their education and have a clear understanding of the importance of healthy living. They make an outstanding contribution to their community by working with a large number of organisations and supporting a range of charities. Attendance is below the national average but current successful action has had a significant impact in improving it.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies throughout the school. As a direct result, pupils' rate of progress is sometimes not as good as it could be. Examples of good and outstanding teaching were seen; and the strengths in these lessons were the challenging tasks for pupils,

the use of modern technology and the fun element introduced to capture pupils' interest. The contribution of the many teaching assistants is a key factor supporting the learning for lower-attaining pupils most effectively. In some instances, however, expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough and teachers talk for too long, leaving pupils insufficient time to settle to their work and produce something worthwhile. Some teachers do not explain clearly enough what is expected of pupils. As a result, pupils' learning is not as effective as it should be. In many of these lessons, many pupils lose interest and concentration and do not make enough progress.

The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Staff make good use of modern technology and the well planned outdoor area to support children's learning.

Assessment procedures are good, including in the Foundation Stage. They clearly identify which pupils are not achieving as well as they should, allowing the school to provide additional support for these pupils right through from Year 1 to Year 6.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides well for the pupils' wide range of learning needs and contributes effectively to their personal development and achievement. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, enabling children to make good progress towards the goals set for them. Appropriate attention is given to promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and computers are used very well to support their learning in all subjects. Support for pupils' personal, social and health education is a strength. Lessons in personal development make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of themselves and to their health education. Teachers are beginning to link subjects together. This helps pupils, especially boys, who particularly enjoy using the computers in this work. A good range of visits and visitors further enriches the curriculum. Additional opportunities for learning are provided by a range of clubs and activities outside of normal lessons. The gardening club is very popular! Pupils appreciate these opportunities with over 50 % of pupils regularly attending regularly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good arrangements for tracking pupils' progress enable support to be matched to pupils' varied needs and help them to understand what they need to do to improve. Those who have emotional difficulties are given sensitive support which enables them make the most of their time at school. Those who have learning difficulties benefit from a good range of additional classes. Partnerships with other agencies are strong. Progress toward pupils' individual goals is regularly monitored. However, the school does not always consider alternative strategies when pupils are having difficulty in reaching particular learning goals. The school identifies pupils who have particular talents and gifts and provides some additional activities for them. A well attended breakfast club gives many pupils a good start to the day. Formal systems underpinning care, including those for child protection, are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a strong sense of common purpose within the school because considerable effort is put into seeking people's views, especially those of staff. Parents at the meeting for parents were keen to commend the headteacher for being a good listener. These views are set alongside a thorough analysis of data, giving the school an accurate view of its effectiveness and guiding future priorities. These are taken forward in what are, for the most part, pertinent action plans. These in turn give direction and purpose to staff training, including that linked to formal performance management. The list of initiatives is extensive, giving leaders much to implement and evaluate. Senior leaders and subject leaders have been given considerable time to do this. However, this is not always used effectively enough. Some changes, such as those governing the use of performance targets, have been thoroughly evaluated to determine impact. However, subject leaders tend to rely on checking data, planning and pupils' work as a way of determining impact. Visits to classrooms to check the quality of teaching and the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning are too infrequent and informal. This leads to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Governors, whilst being supportive of the school, are not questioning enough and do too little to find out for themselves how well the school is doing.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 3

'Time Flies' meets the needs of the community and provides satisfactory care for its children. Parents like the quality of care their children receive. It is led and managed well and there is good, though informal, liaison with parents. Routines are well organised so that children feel secure and happy. A strength of provision is that children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves, for example in planning exciting 'theme' evenings. Their behaviour is good and they willingly help tidy away toys. The children have a good understanding of how to stay safely because they look after each other and staff explain why rules are needed. Children enjoy exercise and the snacks offered, but would have a greater understanding of how to stay healthy if less processed snacks and more fruit were available. Activities are well planned and regularly rotated so that children who attend on different days get a chance to play with all the toys and games. Mandatory policies and procedures are in place but the scope of risk assessment is not broad enough. Systems to supervise staff are not always secure. This is a breach of the requirements of registration.

Since its registration there have been no complaints about the registered day care that required Ofsted or the school to take action so that the day care continued to meet the National Standards. The school is required to keep a record of complaints about the registered day care made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints about the registered day care other than those made to Ofsted.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

- Improve the supervision of non-CRB checked staff
- Provide children with healthier snacks
- Extend the scope of risk assessments.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	1
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?	3
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.

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	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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	3
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	2
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	3
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	3
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	NA
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Lower Fields Primary School, Fenby Avenue, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 8RG

We really enjoyed talking to you all and looking around your school. The particularly good things about your school are.

- How hard your headteacher and all the staff are working as a team to make school an enjoyable place for you- We were amazed at all the contacts school has with different organisations and how much you do in the local community
- How well you all behave in class- It was good to see you all getting on so well together at break times too
- The good start that you all have in the Nursery and Reception classes with lots of interesting things to do indoors and outdoors
- The many after school clubs for you to enjoy - Gardening club looks like hard work!
- How well you are supported and helped with your work by your teachers and their helpers.

There are some things that we would like to see improved.

- We are sure that you can do better in English, mathematics and science so we are asking your teachers and the governors to concentrate on improving the standards you reach in these subjects. We would like to see your teachers provide you with interesting work which makes you think really, really hard in lessons.
- There are some nice things going on in some of your classrooms and we are asking teachers to pop into each other's classrooms to see what is going on and learn from the best teaching ideas.
- We hope that the governors too will visit school more often to appreciate what you are doing in school and see if they can come up with any ideas to make things more interesting for you.

Thank you again for helping us with this inspection. We can see why you enjoy coming to school so much. You are right to be proud of your school. We hope that you will continue to work hard and help your teachers to make it even better.