

Bramham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107844
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	294529
Inspection date	15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Morgan
Headteacher	Mrs Janice Turner
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2005
School address	Clifford Road Bramham Wetherby West Yorkshire LS23 6JQ
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school is situated in a relatively advantaged semi-rural area, but it admits children from further afield. The vast majority of them are from White British families. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average in number. The school has had several acting and consultant headteachers since it was last inspected in 2005. Staff turnover has been high and the number of pupils attending has fallen considerably.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Bramham is a satisfactory school with some good features. Methods used, since November 2005, to eliminate significant weaknesses have been successful. As a result the school now provides satisfactory value for money. Parents are in no doubt that the school has been transformed since its last inspection. They use words like, 'astounding', 'phenomenal' and 'tremendous' to express their delight at the changes. Most acknowledge that the school lost its footing locally, but that now it is back at 'the heart of the community'. Children agree that 'learning was boring', but now 'lessons are interesting and fun'. Inspection findings confirm the school's recovery, but reveal that it is too soon to see the full effect from all the measures taken. This is mainly because staffing has only been stable since January 2007. Nevertheless, there is a good capacity for continued improvement, based on the positive progress to date.

The advances since 2005 are all interconnected. Children's behaviour has improved dramatically because lessons are enjoyable and challenging. Better teaching results from a satisfactory curriculum and the improved assessment of children's work. This, in turn, grows from good leadership and management, which is skilful at evaluation and responsible for the good care, support and guidance that exist.

The areas for development are now matters of consolidation and enrichment rather than related to major limitations, as they were two years ago. For example, improvements in children's writing are not fully consistent, between classes, in sentence construction and the use of vocabulary. Scientific knowledge is acquired at a good pace, but more quickly than skills of investigation. Furthermore, improvements in the curriculum have influenced English and mathematics more than other subjects. This is because pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to practise the key skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects.

Standards are currently above average by the end of Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement after a period when higher attainers were underperforming. Moreover, provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved favourably. They are now achieving as well as other children.

The school's revival is the consequence of various innovations. The quality of teaching has improved because lessons have been monitored closely and shortcomings have been pursued scrupulously. Provision for children in Reception has been upgraded appreciably. Furthermore, relationships with parents are now the best they have been for a long time.

Basic improvements in the assessment of children's learning have been of prime importance. Since September 2006, the school has gained a precise knowledge of where children are up to in English and mathematics and what they need to do next. The speed at which children are catching up in their learning and how this represents satisfactory achievement can now be verified successfully by the school. The school's own self-evaluation is currently accurate in virtually every respect. It is only in the area of academic guidance that the school is a little cautious, believing this to be satisfactory when it is good.

Personal development is good. Children are positive and thoughtful in their behaviour and attitudes. They all appreciate the good care and support that they receive and love the weekly

celebration assembly in which their efforts are acknowledged. Children remember their academic and personal targets accurately and are committed to reaching them.

The help from local authority consultants has been invaluable in putting the school back on the right track. Acting as headteachers and advisers, they have brought stability and laid the foundations for further improvement. Subject leaders on the staff have absorbed the model demonstrated by local authority colleagues well enough to succeed on their own. The first-rate attributes of the current headteacher, and continuing good governance, have had a profound effect on relationships, creating a climate for change in which everyone feels valued and wants to succeed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of children's writing across the school, so that it is all at least good.
- Raise standards in scientific investigation.
- Develop the curriculum to capitalise on links between all subjects and to ensure that key skills are practised.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment at the end of Year 6 can swing widely each year owing to individual factors within the very small classes. This, coupled with a high degree of staff turnover in 2005/06, caused results to be lower than usual. However, the current above average attainment typifies the satisfactory achievement that exists throughout the school. Attainment on entry to the school in Reception is generally above average, but in some years it is broadly satisfactory. Despite these fluctuations, children of all ability levels, throughout the school, are making rapid gains in knowledge and understanding. This has only been the case since January 2007, so the full benefit to overall achievement is yet to be seen. Children's skills in science, while satisfactory, are limited by their ability to plan experiments for themselves and draw their own conclusions. In English, some writing still lacks a breadth of vocabulary and a range of complex sentences.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children enjoy school and are as 'Proud as Punch' of their efforts. On rota, they partake in a delicious fruit punch with the headteacher to discuss their academic and personal achievements. This helps to produce confident, mature and thoughtful learners. Good behaviour is commonplace now. Children are convinced, rightly, that well directed praise and better lessons have caused the upturn. Attendance, which was below average, has improved to about average. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. It is energised by opportunities to help out in school and think about those less fortunate around the world. The sleepover, for example, which raised funds for Children in Need, developed all four aspects at once. Children speak effusively about the way that their health and fitness are promoted. Personal development is good and not yet outstanding because decision making in lessons and taking responsibility for extended research, for example, is at an early stage of development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching, which contains some good features, has replaced the weak provision that existed in 2005. Teaching in Reception gets children off to a good start in complete contrast to the slow progress made by children in this class in 2005. They now develop ideas through well-organised educational play. Progress, throughout the school, is no longer inadequate because teachers know exactly what children can do and how they need to improve. The demands made on higher attainers now contain that extra challenge to make them motivated and interested. High flyers in Year 2, for example, were asked to plan a story in sections using interesting sentences that were well punctuated. They used speech marks, adjectives and adverbs with accuracy and enthusiasm. The overall impact of teaching is satisfactory rather than good, not because it lacks enthusiasm and drive, but just because there has not been enough time to produce an even higher standard of achievement and skilful learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has been successfully enhanced in English and mathematics, although there is more to do in science. The provision for ICT is now advantageous. In 2005, there were too few computers: now there are plenty for everyone. However, children do not use ICT and other essential skills across all subjects because links to facilitate this are not yet in place. The curriculum for personal development has a good effect, particularly since it is linked well to special events such as the recent Health and Safety week. Physical education is provided for well and augmented by exciting visits such as that from the British Karate champion. Extra-curricular activities like the Brain Academy and the Little Gourmets' cookery club are so popular they are oversubscribed. Children discover how to keep safe and healthy well and acquire the confidence and skills necessary for their next school and the workplace.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good care for children underscores the improvements in achievement. Moreover, the school works successfully to influence children's personal development. The work undertaken to improve attendance, primarily by the learning mentor, is good: attendance is no longer inadequate. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place and working well. Positive relationships ensure children feel well supported and that the good guidance about keeping fit, healthy and safe is absorbed. All those with a stake in children's well-being liaise closely, with the headteacher, to provide substantial support: midday supervisors; the learning mentor; parents; teaching staff and governors. Guidance about how to improve work is good, but since it has improved rapidly of late, there are still minor variations in effect between classes. The strong partnership with parents already has a good effect on learning, but possesses a greater potential owing to the enormous goodwill that exists between home and school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The current combination of headteacher, governors and newly developed senior staff, within the school, has monitored lessons well, analysed children's progress, scrutinised their workbooks and conducted interviews with children. This fact finding has produced a great deal of potentially useful information, which is beginning to be used well. The school's renewal has been brought about partly by the good partnerships which have been forged with the local authority, other schools in the area and parents. Advice and support, from all quarters, have been used to the school's advantage. Leaders and managers, at all levels, have a clear understanding about the school's merits and areas for development. However, they have lacked the time to make all of the necessary changes. Nevertheless, the personal touch has made all the difference in the short-term. Ideas like the Brain Academy and the mid-morning fruit cocktails appeal greatly to children and parents alike. They and the rigorous monitoring have helped the school overcome its substantial difficulties.

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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	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	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	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?	3
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	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

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

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my day with you all.

You go to a satisfactory school, but one that is improving fast. I know that you are proud of it because you told me how much it has improved in quite a short time. These are some of the things that I found to be particularly impressive. I appreciate the way that your teachers plan lessons with a clear idea of how successful you might be by the end of them. There was a time when more able children got bored easily, but now you all work hard and enjoy the challenges that come your way. Your headteacher is very skilful at leading the school. I loved her idea of the 'Proud as Punch' meetings. I wish there had been something like that when I was at school. Your parents are very pleased with what the school is like now. This is partly because you and they are clear about your targets. One of the children I spoke to sounded so confident when recalling a personal target of, 'Improving my use of figurative language and adverbial phrases.' Wow!

I know everyone wants to do even better and I have suggested three things that I think will help. The advances that you have all made in writing need to be a little more evenly spread from class to class. In science, you need to work harder at your investigations to get test results higher in Year 6. Lastly, you need more chances to use the skills that you are learning in English, mathematics and information and communication technology in all of the other subjects. It would help you to do this if the contents of subjects like history, geography and religious education were linked more closely.

You can all help by trying even harder with your writing and science, as well as developing your talents in subjects like history. I know you can do it.