

Brandwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105148
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308779
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Axon
Headteacher	Mrs Rosemary Jones
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
School address	Brandwood Street Bolton Lancashire BL3 4BG
Telephone number	01204 333444
Fax number	01204 333455

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, the outcomes of the school's provision for pupils' welfare, the Foundation Stage and the quality of the school's assessment systems. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews and documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school in a residential area where socio-economic conditions are below average. There are areas of social need served by the school. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is well below what is typical for children of their age. The majority of pupils are Asian or Asian British or Black or Black British. There is a well above average number of pupils at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

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 with outstanding features in pupils' personal development and the high level of care it provides. The bleak exterior of the aging building is in sharp contrast to the vibrant and highly attractive interior environment. All who enter the school are made to feel very welcome and all pupils are given an equal opportunity to succeed. As a result, pupils achieve well. The school provides a safe environment where pupils' needs are uppermost in the minds of all who work here. The success of the school is rooted in its effective leadership and management. The school's self-evaluation is very accurate. The high emphasis placed on ensuring that information from assessments of pupils' progress is used well ensures that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their enthusiastic participation in lessons, and their above average attendance. 'You are not left alone when you are new, everyone wants to make friends,' is a typical comment made by pupils. Parents also hold very positive views and are extremely pleased with the care and education provided for their children. 'I feel that the school is brilliantly run and feel it is a great advantage for my child to work with children of different ethnic minorities in the school.' is just one of the many positive remarks made in the parental survey.

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are below those typical for their age. Pupils regardless of ethnicity make good progress overall across Years 1 to 6 and, as a result, achieve well. The key reason for this is good teaching firmly based on using assessment well in ensuring that pupils make the progress they should. If pupils need additional support, whether it is because they have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are at an early stage of learning to speak English, they receive it. Pupils with above average skills are provided with challenging tasks. For example, they are given plenty of opportunities to use their writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum. Standards in the 2007 national tests and assessments at the end of Year 6 were average in English, mathematics and science with similar standards of work seen during the inspection. The school has taken decisive action to improve pupils' numeracy skills since the previous inspection and, as a result, standards have risen. However, the school has recognised that pupils' speed and accuracy in applying these skills in solving mathematical problems is still a weakness. More importantly, it is doing something about it, but the impact of what is being done is not yet fully apparent.

Teaching and learning are of a good quality. Teachers receive very good support from classroom assistants including bilingual staff. As a result, pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress. All members of staff know what they expect pupils to learn, have very good relationships with pupils and their clear explanations make pupils confident about tackling their work. The school's excellent commitment to the learning and care of all its pupils is reflected fully in the attitudes and teaching methods of all members of staff. For example, during the inspection the range and quality of activities pupils across the school were involved in as part of 'Enterprise Week' ensured that learning was meaningful, challenging and fun! In all classes there was a hive of activity to design, advertise, cost out and make items to be sold at the school's Spring Fair. These activities enabled pupils to use their speaking and listening skills, writing, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and artistic skills very well. It also enabled pupils to develop exceedingly well the skills necessary for their future economic well-being.

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being comes as a direct result of the high quality provision for this in the good curriculum. The emphasis on ensuring much breadth in

pupils' education adds greatly to pupils' achievements. The school has reviewed the curriculum and developed initiatives to improve provision. As a result, provision is of a good quality. Classrooms are bright and attractive places where pupils' work is valued. The school is rightly proud of the quality of provision it provides for pupils with emotional and social difficulties. Its support for the most vulnerable pupils is reflected both in the strategic oversight of their care by the school's leaders and by the high quality support they receive by members of the support staff. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities overall.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and valued as individuals. They have very positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Older pupils enjoy helping younger children at break-times. Pupils know how to stay healthy and talk enthusiastically about the different types of fruit available every week on 'Fruity Friday.' They participate eagerly in sport and have a very good understanding of how to stay fit. The fact that older pupils have to climb and descend six flights of stairs at least three times a day also plays a part in ensuring that they have regular exercise! Pupils particularly appreciate the activities that take place outside the school day. For example, the dance club is very popular. They make a very good contribution to the school community through the many responsibilities they undertake. Those pupils on the school council, those who act as peer mediators and playground buddies take their responsibilities very seriously.

Leadership and management are good. The school has highly effective procedures for looking at itself and has accurately identified what works well or what needs to improve. Subject leaders work with senior management effectively to raise standards. Governance is good. Governors provide good support and hold the school to account well. The school has a good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage unit with levels of skills that are well below those typical for their age. A significant number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Children settle quickly into the routines of the Foundation Stage and clearly enjoy coming to school. Children develop self-confidence and learn to become increasingly independent, making good progress. However, pupils' achievement is below that typical of children nationally by the time they enter Year 1 because of their low starting point. The quality of teaching and learning is good as are the leadership and management. All members of staff ensure that there is a wide range of well focused activities to promote learning. However, at times there is a not always a good balance between child-initiated activities and teacher-led activities. The children who are learning to speak English as an additional language receive effective support. The outside area is limited in size which places limitations on the opportunities for children to use it in such a large school. The overall quality of the children's experiences provides a good foundation for their future learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are given regular and challenging opportunities to use their mental arithmetic skills in problem solving.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

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

What a lovely school you attend! I am writing to you to thank you for your help during my visit to your school and to share with you my opinions about it. I agree with the school that it is a good one that provides you with a good standard of education. I was very impressed by how friendly and polite you are, not just with me, but most importantly with each other. You behave very well and you work hard and try your best in lessons. I enjoyed seeing you take part in the Enterprise activities and only wish I had the time to come back and buy some of the products you are making.

I agree with you that your headteacher and teachers are very caring and help you very much if you have a problem or personal issue. The younger children in the Foundation Stage get a great start to school life. You achieve well in English and mathematics. It was good to see you not only produce some good writing in literacy lessons but also in other subjects. I have asked the school to work with you to try and improve your speed and accuracy in using your numeracy skills in solving problems.

All the jobs you do in school and the way many of you help others, for example at lunchtimes, is certainly helping you to become good citizens of the future. It is good to see that many of you know what you need to do to be safe and keep healthy and fit.

Your school provides all of you with very caring place to learn. You are given lots of help by teachers and teaching assistants which means that you are safe and secure at all times.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and wish you the very best for your future.