

Brentnall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105893
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	308975
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Hayton
Headteacher	Mr C Marriott
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Northumberland Street Higher Broughton Salford Lancashire M7 4RP
Telephone number	0161 7924317
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school serves an ethnically and culturally diverse population in an inner city area. Pupils come from a wide range of heritages and around half do not have English as their home language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at random points during the primary years is much larger than average, reflecting population transience in the locality. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is more than double that found in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school correctly judges itself to be good and provides good value for money. Its inclusive, caring ethos promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem well. This enables them to feel secure and happy in school and have positive attitudes, leading to good academic progress. Everyone benefits from the supportive ethos.

It is particularly important for the high proportion of children who have experienced great changes in their lives; for several this has included relocation to a new country. Parents recognise and value the school's many qualities. 'I think the school provides a very caring learning and social atmosphere for the range of abilities, cultures and backgrounds of our children,' is a typical view.

Most children start school with skills that are well below national expectations and leave Year 6 with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. This level of attainment has been consistent over the past five years. It represents good achievement and is the product of good teaching and learning. Standards in mathematics are currently higher than in English. The school is working hard to address this relative imbalance through initiatives to improve pupils' writing, although these are newly introduced and have not yet had time to impact on standards. Very good relationships result in pupils working hard and feeling valued by staff and each other. They take a pride in their work and consistently do their best. These positive attitudes contribute to pupils' good personal development and are illustrated in their exemplary behaviour. In response to the widening range of different cultures and languages represented in the school, staff develop expertise and strategies to help meet the needs of those who are learning to speak English. This is having a positive impact on the progress these pupils make. Good provision for pupils with additional learning needs enables them to make good progress.

A well enriched curriculum includes activities before and after school and a good programme of events and visits, all of which add enjoyment and interest for pupils. The school has developed a range of productive partnerships which enable pupils to access specialist teaching in music and drama and support English language teaching. Assessment is systematic and thorough and pupils' progress is tracked carefully. Pupils understand the purpose of lessons and frequent opportunities for them to work together help them to grow in confidence. Although marking in English and mathematics is helpful for pupils, it is not consistently so in other subjects.

The school is led well by the headteacher and the assistant headteacher, who set high expectations of pupils' progress and well-being. Recently, other senior staff have begun to play a more active role, particularly in checking on the quality of the school's work. Although it is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes, a well developed team approach is already evident and leaders at all levels know the school well. This means that they have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's improvement plan correctly identifies priorities and appropriate actions to help it to meet its challenging targets. Nevertheless, the criteria to measure success are not defined sharply enough to enable the school to know whether its actions have been successful. The supportive governing body is developing confidence in acting as the school's critical friend and has overseen significant improvements in the school premises over the last two years.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision enables children to make a good start. They quickly become happy and receptive learners. This is because the well led Foundation Stage team successfully nurtures children's personal and social development. Children's skills on entry to Nursery are well below expectations, but good teaching and learning result in children making good progress. However, overall standards at the end of Reception are below average. The high proportion of children who do not speak or understand English on entry to the school, rapidly make themselves understood and leave the Reception class with a good level of fluency in their new language. Vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given sensitive care and learning support. The curriculum is well matched to children's needs. There are good opportunities for learning through a range of interesting and stimulating activities. Relationships are positive and children behave very well. Children's learning is not as effective in the new outside classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make it clear how the impact of actions taken to improve things will be measured.
- Extend the good practice in marking in English and mathematics to other subjects, so that pupils have clear guidance on how to improve all their written work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From entering Year 1 with below average standards, pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 to 6. This is underpinned by good teaching and by the positive attitudes pupils develop towards learning. Achievement in mathematics is good by the end of Year 2, with standards slightly above the national average. Standards in literacy at the end of Year 2 have not been as strong and were below the national average in 2007. Similarly, in Years 3 to 6, achievement in English has not been as strong as in mathematics in recent years. Determined action has been taken to remedy this situation. This drive for improvement has resulted in standards matching the national average in all subjects at the end of Year 6 in 2007, with the best achievement in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress and their standards match those of their classmates. This is the result of the school's good provision for the very wide range of pupils' learning needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils gain confidence in an atmosphere of trust and respect, learning to express their feelings and concerns in lessons, in circle time and in assemblies. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is, therefore, very good. Their cultural development is good and they are prepared well for life in a multicultural society. Behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Pupils support each other well as learning and language partners. Pupils readily take on responsibilities as monitors and playtime buddies. The influential school council is proud of its achievements, for example, in obtaining better playtime equipment. Pupils enjoy improving their physical fitness by enthusiastically joining in early morning fitness sessions and a dance club at lunchtime. Pupils work cooperatively in lessons and develop good basic skills and this contributes well to

their future economic well-being. Attendance is below the national average. The school is actively encouraging improved attendance through incentive schemes and through supportive relationships with families. As a result, attendance is now improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice. Lessons are well planned and the pace of learning is brisk. The objectives of each lesson are shared so that pupils know what they are expected to achieve. Teachers use questions well to move pupils' learning along. Pupils say that lessons are 'interesting and challenging' and that they enjoy their work. They make good progress in most lessons. However, occasionally they are unclear about what they need to do in their independent activities and this can limit their progress. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and pupils apply themselves very well to their work. Well trained teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers to effectively support pupils who have additional learning needs. This is a key factor in assuring pupils' good progress. Assessment is rigorous and this ensures that problems are identified early and addressed. Although the quality of marking is strong in English and mathematics, it is not sufficiently so in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school places an appropriately strong emphasis on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Innovative work is under way to create frequent opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in other subjects. As a result, improvements can already be seen in pupils' better achievements in writing. The curriculum is planned well to meet pupils' wide range of learning needs, including those who are learning to speak English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This ensures that all pupils enjoy equal access to all that the school offers. A wide range of enrichment activities adds much to pupils' enjoyment of learning and to their personal development. These activities include visits, a residential experience for older pupils, sports and arts activities and a good range of after school clubs. Specialist teaching allows pupils to develop their musical skills in singing and through instrumental tuition.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides very good pastoral care for its pupils and their parents understandably appreciate this. Typical of many responses was, 'School is like another family for my children.' Parents also feel that the school keeps them well informed about their children's welfare and academic progress. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that there are effective procedures for dealing with any instances of bullying that may arise. They trust the staff and know who to turn to when they need help. Staff know pupils extremely well and are committed to their well-being. Great care is taken to include all pupils in every aspect of school life. Vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs are supported well and the school seeks advice and support from a range of external agencies in order to ensure this. Academic guidance is not as strong as pastoral care. There are too few opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning. Together with some relative weaknesses in teachers' marking, this means that pupils are not always aware of what they should do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and the assistant headteacher are positive role models for the school community. They are fully committed to raising standards, improving achievement and providing all pupils with equal opportunities to flourish. For example, although pupils' achievement has been consistently good over time, the school's leaders are not content with this and continue to set ambitious targets. Their vision for school improvement is shared by all staff. As a result of their newly defined roles, middle managers are increasingly checking on the quality of provision. This is providing an increased impetus for improvement. An example is that as a result of subject leaders' innovative work, pupils are now practising their writing skills in many subjects. The school development plan is clear about what improvements need to be made. However, it is less clear about how the impact of the actions taken to achieve these will be measured. This omission limits the school's ability fully to evaluate its effectiveness. Supportive governors are increasingly involved in the school's daily life and developing their ability to hold the school's leaders to account.

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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?	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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?	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	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**

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting along with your learning. It was lovely to meet you all and we really enjoyed our conversations with you. The things you told us helped us greatly in making our judgements about the school.

Brentnall is a good school and it provides you with a good education. Here are some of the good things we found out.

- Good teaching in all classes makes it possible for you to be good learners and to make good progress.
- You have really positive attitudes to your work. You work hard and try your best in all lessons. You work very well in pairs and help each other to succeed.
- Your behaviour is excellent. Well done! The school is helping you to grow up with a sense of responsibility towards other people and you are learning to think carefully about important issues in your assemblies.
- The staff take very good care of you.

We have asked the headteacher and the staff to make the school even better by:

- finding good ways to measure the success of the things they introduce to help to raise standards in school
- marking your work in all subjects as well as they do in English and mathematics. We thought you'd find that helpful.

You can help with all of this by continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future.