

Broadbottom Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106227
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	309061
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Arthur Markham

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonathan Heydon
Headteacher	Mrs Esther Baland
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Mottram Road Broadbottom Hyde Cheshire SK14 6BB
Telephone number	01457 762382
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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 serves a mixed area with pupils coming from a range of social backgrounds. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is below that in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. The vast majority of pupils are White British with only a very small number from minority ethnic groups. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school has been awarded the Activemark and has Eco School and Healthy School status. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection and there have been many changes in staff.

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 provides a satisfactory standard of education and has some good features. It is rapidly improving under the strong, determined leadership of the new headteacher. Parents rate the school highly and many say that they are very pleased at the changes that have been instigated since her arrival. The school has a warm family atmosphere and pupils benefit from very good relations with their teachers. Parents appreciate the way that the school takes account of the individual needs of their children. The quality of care is good and pupils say that they feel safe and secure. Pupils' personal development is good and given a high priority. Pupils consequently become mature, confident young people as they progress through the school. They are happy and polite, talking confidently to visitors in a mature way. They behave well and make a strong contribution to school life.

Children make a good start to their learning in the Reception class. In Years 1 and 2 they continue to make good progress and reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, in recent years the performance of Year 6 pupils in national tests has been below average, and in English significantly below average. In part this was the consequence of the number of pupils joining the school with special learning needs, but the school recognised that weak teaching was also leading to some pupils underachieving. Robust steps were taken to address this issue and some changes in staffing followed. As a result, standards improved in 2007 when pupils' performance in mathematics and science was around national averages, although their performance in English was still well below average. This upward trend in pupils' performance is being maintained, but is not yet reflected in test results. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and recent data shows that the vast majority are now making good progress. This is reflected in the work of the current pupils, which shows that standards are much improved. However, although standards are improving, they are not yet high enough in English, mathematics or science.

Pupils clearly enjoy school. Close attention is given to stimulating them to want to learn by making the curriculum relevant and interesting. This is reflected in the enthusiasm shown by the vast majority of pupils, who are all keen to explain how much they like school and their teachers. They say, 'We are friends with all our teachers,' and appreciate greatly the way that they help them to learn. Whilst the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there are inconsistencies. To some extent recent changes to staff are addressing this, but they are yet to have full impact because it takes time for new teachers to be fully inducted into the workings of the school. In the best lessons pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn because teaching is lively and activities interesting. However, the effective approaches used in some classrooms are not evident in others. Less successful lessons are marked by explanations that lack stimulation which, together with a slow pace, result in pupils' interest waning. Although staff are working together to improve teaching, more remains to be done.

Since her appointment the headteacher has worked hard, and with success, to develop a team approach within the staff. They welcome her clear vision and the changes that have been made, and share her determination to raise standards. Self-evaluation procedures accurately identify what needs to be done to improve achievement. In particular, the strong emphasis given to linking performance management to school priorities and developing the skills of staff is having a positive impact. Governors are involved in the life of the school and carry out their responsibilities well. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas needing

improvement and are an effective part of the team. The resultant strong team approach gives the school a good capacity to continue to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception year) is good. Well thought out procedures ensure that children quickly settle. They make good progress because teaching is good and the curriculum rich and stimulating. Close attention is given to social development so that children quickly develop good learning habits and learn to work and play together amicably. Activities are well planned with a good balance of teacher-led and independent learning opportunities, although adults do not always involve themselves fully in activities. Children move to their tasks enthusiastically and explore a wide range of well structured activities to develop their skills. They feel secure in the warm and friendly environment, clearly enjoy learning and behave well. The teacher and support staff work well together and the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Good attention is given to all areas of learning and the small outdoor area is used well to link learning outdoors to that in the bright and stimulating classroom. Children's progress is carefully monitored and standards are good. Children enter the Reception class with broadly average skills; most reach the national expectations for children of their age by the end of the Reception year and a good number exceed them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Key Stage 2, particularly in English.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good.
- Ensure the effective induction of staff new to the school.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 pupils build on their successful start in Reception. They make good progress to achieve above average standards by the end of Year 2. In the last two years there has been an improvement in standards in reading and writing as a consequence of the focus given to these aspects of learning. At Key Stage 2 pupils' performance in tests fluctuates, as a result of the small numbers in year groups. However, the progress made by pupils has slowed in recent years and their performance in tests dipped. In the three years prior to 2007, test results were below average overall and in 2006 well below average. The determined action being taken to remedy this situation resulted in an improvement in 2007, although standards in English were still well below average, mainly because no pupil achieved the higher Level 5. School tracking data and pupils' work indicate that this improvement continues and pupils' progress is accelerating. The underachievement of previous years is successfully being eradicated. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy very good relations with their teachers and rate the school highly, saying, 'Broadbottom Primary is a good school.' They are pleased at the way the school listens to their views through the work of the school council and that a number of their suggestions for change have been listened to and implemented. Older pupils look after younger ones at playtime and their awareness of the need to care for the environment is very apparent in the work of the eco committee. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The school is a harmonious community, with pupils saying that everyone is friendly and there is no bullying. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop a good understanding of different cultures, faiths and traditions through lessons and assemblies. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the above average level of attendance. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles as indicated by the school's achievement of the Healthy School Award and the Activemark. Their sensible and considerate attitudes, together with their sound basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school has faced a number of changes in staff in the last two years, which it is dealing with well. However, this has resulted in some inconsistencies in teaching across the school. Teaching is of good quality in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, but more variable in Key Stage 2. Recent staffing changes are rectifying this situation, but have yet to have great impact. Good teaching is marked by stimulating explanations, well planned activities that challenge pupils, lessons that move at a good pace and the use of a range of strategies to involve pupils independently in pairs and groups. Less successful teaching results from lessons that lack pace, presentations that fail to interest pupils and unimaginative use of the interactive whiteboard, with the result that pupils' attention wanders. Teachers use assessment well to determine the learning needs of their pupils and make good use of developmental comments when marking pupils' work so that pupils know how they can improve. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and support pupils well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum gives close attention to the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Other subjects are also covered well but, although the curriculum presents a rich diet of learning experiences to pupils, the linking of these subjects to make learning more relevant for pupils is at an early stage of development. Spanish is taught throughout the school. The use of specialist teachers enhances provision in music and physical education. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school makes learning more interesting for pupils. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. A residential visit for the whole of Key Stage 2 successfully supports the development of pupils' personal and social skills as well as giving them opportunities to participate in a number of physical activities. International links with a school in Spain and a special school in Wales develop pupils' awareness of life in other countries. The range of extra-curricular activities on offer for pupils is impressive and greatly appreciated by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils well and work closely with parents to ensure that the level of pastoral support provided is good. Pupils say that teachers listen, they feel safe and would happily go to an adult if they had any concerns, saying, 'We trust them.' Child protection arrangements are in place. Health and safety checks and risk assessments are carried out rigorously. The school has well developed links with outside agencies and arrangements are well organised for supporting any vulnerable pupils and those with special learning needs. Support for the very small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English is limited. The academic guidance given to pupils is good. They are set short-term targets, which clearly indicate the next steps in their learning. These are regularly reviewed and discussed with pupils, who consequently have a clear view of what they must do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a very good role model for staff and has quickly developed systems that support school improvement effectively. She is well supported by the staff, who welcome the clear direction she gives to the work of the school. The changes in staff that have resulted from the determined drive to raise standards are being dealt with successfully, although more remains to be done to fully integrate them into the working of the school. Procedures have been developed that rigorously track pupils' progress and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The dip in standards at Key Stage 2 is being tackled in a very determined manner and pupils' achievement is improving. Links with parents are very good and their views sought. Typical of their positive comments is that, 'The school has undergone a transformation since the new headteacher arrived.' The work of governors has improved markedly since the last inspection. They now play an active role in the life of the school. This was apparent during the inspection when a number of them attended the school's achievement assembly and were invited by the headteacher to help give out awards to pupils. This involvement, together with governors' careful monitoring of the work of the school, enables them to give it effective support and challenge.

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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
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?	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 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	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	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?	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?	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	3
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**

I enjoyed my visit to your school and appreciated greatly the way you welcomed me in such a friendly manner. It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you and learn how much you like your teachers and school. I think Broadbottom Church of England Primary is a satisfactory school, but is rapidly improving. This means it does some things well, but other things need to be better.

The headteacher and staff work hard to make sure you are given lots of interesting things to do so that school really is fun and you really do enjoy learning. Your teachers take good care of you and it was pleasing to hear that you feel safe and secure in school. I was very impressed at your good behaviour in class and around the school. It was also pleasing to hear how much you enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities that is made available to you. I was also delighted at the way that you are taking such good care of your school and the environment. Your awareness of the need to eat a healthy diet and to exercise regularly is good and you are clearly very proud of the fact that the school has achieved the Healthy School Award. I was also very pleased at the sensible way that older pupils look after younger ones so that the playground is a happy place at playtimes and lunchtimes.

Your headteacher and all the staff are keen to make sure that Broadbottom Church of England Primary is a good school. They have already done a lot and have lots of good ideas about what they will do next. I have asked them to work hard to help you reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science, especially the older pupils in Years 3 to 6. I want them to make all teaching in the school even more stimulating in order to help you learn faster. You can play your part in this by making sure that you work hard and always do your best. Finally, I have asked that those teachers new to the school are helped to settle in quickly so that they can play a full part in making sure that you all achieve as well as you possibly can.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. You are very lucky to go to such a warm and friendly school. I wish you well and good luck for the future.