

Britannia Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106417
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	309120
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Gordon Alston

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Harrison
Headteacher	Mrs McBride and Mr Donaldson (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Parliament Street Lower Ince Wigan Lancashire WN3 4JH
Telephone number	01942 760036
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school lies in Lower Ince, a suburb of Wigan, but takes pupils from a wider area. Most pupils live in an area with significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than that found in most schools. There is a below average number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. The school gained the Activemark award and a Healthy Schools Award in 2007. Currently there is an acting headteacher as the permanent headteacher is temporarily absent.

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. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. Parents and pupils confirm its excellent work in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being as well as the high quality of care, guidance and support provided. The school is improving and is succeeding in its aims to ensure that pupils enjoy learning, achieve well and have access to a rich curriculum. Instrumental in this is a dedicated headteacher, who is enthusiastically supported by the senior and middle management team. Typical comments from parents are, 'It really is a community school' and, 'it helps us all in so many ways'.

Senior managers and governors are effective in creating a safe, secure environment in which pupils thrive personally and academically. Pupils develop very positive relationships and leave school with high self-esteem. Because pupils know that they are all valued equally, they grow in self-confidence, increasingly become independent and strive hard to succeed. Very effective systems to promote better achievement, introduced over the last two years, have resulted in pupils' achievements moving from satisfactory to good throughout the school.

Standards have risen over the same period. Rigorous assessment, combined with successful strategies to eliminate underachievement and to target individuals and groups of pupils, have resulted in improvements in the number of pupils reaching expected standards in the national tests. This has led to standards rising to broadly average by the end of Year 6 in 2007. Despite improvements in the 2007 tests, the school rightly identifies improving pupils' writing, especially that of those who are more able, as an important and necessary next step to ensure that they achieve as well as they can.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Behaviour is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and fosters pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They know that it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle and to consider the safety of themselves and others. These strengths are a reflection of the staff's diligent care and their commitment to promote pupils' social and emotional development. This begins in the Foundation Stage, where children make the most progress in this area of their learning. However, children's learning is somewhat restricted because of the limited outdoor provision. Pupils make a good contribution to school life, for example, through the activities of class councils.

Pupils' enjoyment of school comes from good teaching and an imaginative curriculum. The much increased use of information and communication technology (ICT), of specialist teaching and of linking learning to real-life situations has enthused pupils to be fully involved in their learning. There is similarly good teaching and support provided for pupils who find more difficulty in learning. The school knows itself very well and is proud of its achievements, but equally realistic about those areas where improvement is still needed. It has improved very well since the last inspection and, given its recent record of higher achievement and improving standards, demonstrates both good capacity to improve and good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage unit buzzes and is a hive of activity, with sounds of excitement echoing around as children play and learn well together. Children get a flying start and quickly become engrossed in a busy school life. 'It's better than being at home,' was a comment made by several

parents. Children's needs are uppermost in everyone's mind and this is evident in a rich, active learning environment. Strong leadership by the Foundation Stage manager ensures good teaching, a warm, caring, supportive atmosphere and children's good achievement both personally and academically. The outdoor play area, however, is small and limits opportunities to enhance children's learning in their physical and creative development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly for the highest-attaining pupils.
- Improve outdoor play facilities for Foundation Stage children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On entry to Nursery, children's skills and knowledge are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress, especially in their personal and social education, because their learning is carefully tailored to develop their basic skills. However, in all areas of their learning many do not reach expected levels by the time they enter Year 1.

Throughout the school, good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. Standards in Key Stage 1 have been rising continually for the past two years and currently remain just below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, few children reach the higher levels in writing. For a number of years, standards in Years 3 to 6 have also been improving significantly. In 2007, the Year 6 test results in English, mathematics and science were broadly average. This represents good progress overall given pupils' starting points. However, a number of pupils who achieve the higher Level 5 in reading do not do so in writing. The new, comprehensive checks on pupils' progress enable strengths and weaknesses in their achievement to be identified early. Appropriate intervention strategies are then effectively used to help those in danger of falling behind to catch up. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress, because of effective support they receive from staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and have excellent attitudes to their work. This is evident, for instance, in the popularity of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended. Attendance is broadly average. The school tries very hard to promote good attendance and this is beginning to have a positive effect. Pupils' behaviour is good and they have a very keen awareness of personal safety and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. A reflection of the school's excellent work in this area is the award of Healthy School status. Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the school community and the locality. There are many opportunities for them to give their opinions and support new initiatives in school. The class councils are particularly active in improving the learning environment. For example, they contribute positively to developing the school's curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, having achieved good basic skills and strong qualities of leadership, independence and teamwork.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Teachers' very caring relationships with pupils generate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Where teaching is best, there is a focus on developing pupils' basic skills, giving them opportunities to use these skills in everyday activities and providing effective support. Good class management and stimulating tasks contribute to pupils' enjoyment. Lessons generally move at a good pace and pupils work hard because they are praised for achieving well in their work. The very occasional less successful lesson results when the pace of learning slows and tasks fail to fully enthuse and suitably challenge the more able pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work very carefully and pupils respond well to the useful comments that make clear how they can improve their work. Well focused targets also help pupils improve aspects of their work. Learning support staff are deployed well to enable pupils with additional learning needs to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich range of experiences for all pupils. The school rightly places great emphasis on the development of basic skills. This is very important given the weaknesses that exist in pupils' communication and social skills. The strong focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT ensures that there are good links between subjects. The curriculum is enriched by a focus on creativity. There are special projects, for example a 'community week', and this gives all pupils much to enjoy and especially appeals to the most talented pupils. The physical education curriculum is restricted because of the small school hall. The school compensates for this and makes a good contribution to the fitness of pupils through a very wide range of sports clubs and coaching opportunities. In addition, there is a good range of activities other than sports, for example, hand massage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding systems to promote the personal development of pupils are key strengths of the school. A typical comment from parents, 'The school cares about every child', is a fine summary of the school's approach. For example, the school strongly supports its more vulnerable pupils through several initiatives and their emotional development is nurtured by teaching specific programmes. The tracking of pupils' personal and academic progress is very good. Pupils with learning or emotional difficulties are identified quickly and receive very good individual support from the earliest stage. Very good links with external agencies enable the school to provide welcome advice and guidance for pupils and their parents. Parents and pupils have a very clear understanding of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. All aspects of child protection, safe recruitment of staff, risk assessment and health and safety meet requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputies provide good leadership, having set a clear direction for school development. They expect high standards and the constantly improving provision ensures that there is ongoing effective capacity to improve. Staff, governors and parents share their vision and contribute fully to the school's continuing improvement. The school is now at the heart of the community. Improvement since the previous inspection has been outstanding. The headteacher has successfully led the school since its last inspection and is ensuring effective teaching, good achievement and high quality care. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate in its judgements. The school is justifiably recognised by the parents as 'a great place for children to be'. Governors understand the school's strengths very well and are equally clear about where improvements should be made.

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	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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	1
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	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	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**

After spending two days in your school, I want to thank you all so much for making the experience a very enjoyable one. I came to see how well your school is performing and you have a very important role in this, just as your teachers have. Your good behaviour and very warm relationships are a credit to you all.

Well, what did I think after my visit? Britannia Bridge is a good school.

I always ask children for their views of the school and was told, 'It's great at Britannia Bridge - you feel as though the teachers really care about you and how well you are doing.' Your school is a very caring place. You have a committed headteacher and deputies who lead your school successfully and put you at the centre of all that happens. All the staff make teaching interesting and help you to work hard. As a result, you are learning lots in lessons. The staff try to make school enjoyable and exciting with the many visits you go on and lots of visitors into school. I was pleased to see how hard you work, but equally important is how well you all get on. I saw lots of you who have responsibilities and carry them out very well. I was also very pleased to see all the clubs you have. You take regular exercise and sport is important to you.

To make your school even better, your teachers need to help you to have better skills in writing, particularly those of you who find learning easier than others. I know you all think the new Foundation Stage unit is great but it needs a bigger and better equipped outdoor play area.

Finally, you can all help your school get even better by making sure you attend every day.

I would like to thank you again and wish you and your teachers every success for the future.