

Bankwood Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107066
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309302
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Dunstone Rhodes
Headteacher	Mrs M Broughton
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Bankwood Close Sheffield South Yorkshire S14 1LW
Telephone number	0114 2396711
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average. Many pupils live in areas that are socially and economically disadvantaged. A much higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Nearly one in four pupils is from a minority ethnic group. The majority of these pupils are of Black African heritage. A greater than average proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. More pupils than average join or leave at other than the usual points in their school career. This is often because they are from families seeking asylum in this country. In February 2007, a children's centre opened on the school site. The school is supported by a partner primary school. There have been a significant number of changes in the school's leadership since the previous inspection. From November 2007, the headteacher of the partner school led Bankwood temporarily. A consultant interim headteacher was put in place in January 2008. She became acting headteacher just prior to the current inspection. A teacher from the partner school is working in Bankwood's Reception class in the absence of the Foundation Stage leader.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Standards and achievement have declined year-on-year since the previous inspection. During their time in school most pupils make too little progress and their achievement is inadequate, particularly in English. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are exceptionally low. The quality of teaching is inadequate: there are too many weaknesses and inconsistencies to enable pupils to learn as well as they should. Too often, work is not matched closely enough to what pupils need to learn next. In particular, pupils identified by the school as faster learners are not always set tasks that challenge them enough. This prevents pupils reaching the levels they should. Pupils' books show that teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough, especially in English. There is too much acceptance of incorrect spelling and poor presentation so pupils have no incentive to improve their work.

The school's effectiveness is made worse because many pupils do not attend regularly. As a result their learning is interrupted and their achievement is suppressed. Despite the school's efforts, attendance is inadequate and is declining. This is a key reason why pupils' personal development is inadequate. A number of parents are concerned about behaviour in the school. However, inspectors found that behaviour is satisfactory and lessons are seldom disrupted. The curriculum is satisfactory and includes a number of sports clubs which suitably promote pupils' health and fitness. Pupils feel secure in school because their safety is given a high priority. The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other particularly vulnerable pupils are supported well, and so they make satisfactory progress in their learning. For the great majority of pupils, poorly developed skills in literacy and numeracy mean that they are at a severe disadvantage when they move on to secondary school.

Leadership and management are inadequate. Although a strong temporary leadership team is in place, continuity of leadership is insecure. The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, with valuable support from the partner headteacher, have identified where the school must improve. They have begun to make changes, for example, to systems for tracking pupils' progress. Staff are eager to share in this work. However, there has not been time for the leaders to show that they can achieve and sustain all the improvements needed to provide a good enough quality of education and raise standards. Additionally, the school does not have the permanent leadership necessary for this sustained improvement to take place. This lack of continuity in leadership weakens further the school's capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

The Foundation Stage is inadequate. When children join the Reception class their skills are mostly well below those expected for their age. They are especially weak in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are inadequate. The school recently requested a local

authority (LA) review of children's skills when they join and leave the Reception class. This showed that previous assessments made by the school were seriously flawed. Evaluations of children's learning do not consistently influence the provision made for each individual.

The teacher from the partner school has restructured the curriculum, extending children's experiences. Children are currently provided with a suitable balance of activities led by staff and opportunities to pursue their own interests and learn independently. Children are adapting well to the new systems. Staff keep them safe and secure but children's attendance is inadequate. Currently, children are making satisfactory progress as a result of the interventions of the partner school. However, there is no evidence that these improvements can be sustained without external support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics.
- Improve pupils' attendance.
- Ensure that teaching consistently promotes high standards and meets the learning needs of all pupils.
- Secure sustainable and effective leadership.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

National test results for Year 2 pupils have been consistently well below average since 2003. The Year 6 results have also declined over the same period and have been exceptionally low since 2005. In 2007, less than one in four of the Year 6 pupils reached the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. The school missed its targets by a considerable margin. Its own assessment systems are not well enough established to provide compelling evidence that current pupils are on line to do better.

Achievement is inadequate. The progress most pupils make, especially in English, is unacceptably slow. The standards reached by some pupils are low because they have only recently started learning to speak English. However, these pupils often make better progress than their class-mates because the school supports vulnerable pupils well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 4

The poor rate of attendance and the inadequate preparation pupils have for their future economic well-being mean that their personal development overall is inadequate. Pupils' poor literacy and numeracy skills mean they are not prepared well enough for the future. Although some absence is due to illness, too many pupils miss school for no good reason; as result their learning and progress is disrupted. Pupils have a sound awareness of healthy lifestyles and make sensible choices of food at breaks and lunch-times. They enjoy their lessons and play-times. Behaviour has improved greatly over recent years with a significant fall in the number of exclusions. Pupils do not consider bullying to be a problem although they think that the behaviour of a few pupils sometimes spoils things for everyone else. Children from different ethnic groups play and cooperate together well with no recent recorded incidents of racist behaviour. The members of the school council represent their classes conscientiously and pupils are keen to take on jobs around the school. They readily support charities and know about the significance of events such as 'Refugee Week' and 'Holocaust Day'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is not good enough to enable pupils to make up the huge gaps in their learning. Teachers usually plan varied activities and resources but they do not always monitor pupils' learning closely enough. This sometimes results in time being wasted when individual pupils finish their work and have to wait to be set the next task. There is often too little or no difference between the demands made of average and higher attaining pupils. As a result these pupils in particular do not always learn something new by the end of the lesson. By contrast the lowest attaining pupils are generally given work that meets their needs and they are often supported sensitively by teaching assistants. Behaviour is mostly managed satisfactorily but occasionally pupils are allowed to call out answers or speak when they should be listening.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements but it is not exciting. There is a wholly relevant emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Although pupils have plenty of time for English and mathematics the quality of teaching means that it is not used effectively. Special programmes meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. Teachers are starting to make links between subjects in order to consolidate pupils' learning. Opportunities for personal, social and health education are well considered and contribute to aspects of pupils' personal development. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were enthralled by puppets during an assembly, helping them to recall golden rules for behaviour. Although limited in number, visits and visitors do enhance pupils' enjoyment and learning. A play-worker recruited temporarily by the acting headteacher is developing activities during breaks and helping pupils to appreciate the importance of fair play and taking turns.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Current government requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. A variety of agencies work in partnership with the school to support its work. For example, the education welfare officer has helped the school to devise a range of measures aimed at improving attendance. The learning mentor performs a key role in this work. The school provides effective support for those pupils who face challenges in their lives. Whole-school approaches to managing pupils' behaviour are successful. Pupils and their parents enjoy the warm welcome they receive at the breakfast club, offering a pleasant and healthy start to the day. A group of parents provide regular, energetic and valued support to pupils, for example, by listening to readers and organising activities such as cooking. A system to track pupils' progress more closely has recently been established. However, this and the use of pupils' individual targets need time to become fully embedded.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The acting headteacher is experienced and works very closely with the deputy headteacher, partner headteacher and LA staff. As a result the school's weaknesses have been identified accurately and are being tackled with determination. However, these actions are very recent and their effectiveness cannot yet be confirmed. A start has been made in developing leadership skills in other staff, for example, subject leaders, but the monitoring carried out by these leaders is not always sufficiently rigorous. This means that, for instance, evaluations of teachers' marking are not consistently accurate and helpful. The deputy headteacher leads the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. Leaders and staff are committed to improving the school and pupils' prospects but the lack of permanent leadership makes this commitment very difficult to sustain. Governance is inadequate. Governors have not monitored the school's performance closely enough.

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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?	4
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	4
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
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 being so polite and helpful when we visited your school. This letter is to let you know our judgements about how well it is doing. Unfortunately, the school is not enabling you all to do as well as you should so we have recommended that 'special measures' are taken to help it improve. This means that your school will get special support and that inspectors will visit Bankwood regularly to make sure that all is going according to plan.

All those who work in your school care for you and make your safety a high priority. It was good to find out that you try to make healthy choices at meal times and that you enjoy school. We know that you and your parents think that the breakfast club is a really good idea.

We want the school to make sure that you learn faster and reach higher standards in English and mathematics. This will help to prepare you better for moving to secondary school at the end of Year 6. At present those of you who sometimes find learning difficult are given work that helps you to learn but other pupils often do not get the sort of work that really challenges them to learn. We have asked the teachers to set you all work that is hard enough, so you learn new things every day. We don't want them to accept anything but your best work. We are sure that you will play your part by trying as hard as you can to do your best.

Too many pupils do not come to school regularly. This is very disappointing and we have asked the school to work with your parents to improve attendance. When you miss lessons, your learning stops and you fall behind.

As you know, there have been several different headteachers in recent years. We want the school to have a headteacher who sees through all the changes that are needed at Bankwood. All the adults connected with the school want it to improve and we are sure that they and you will work hard to achieve this.

We send each of you and all the staff our best wishes for the future.