

Brandling Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108359
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	309660
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edwin Bartley
Headteacher	Mrs Maggie Mitford
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Mulberry Street Felling Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE10 0JB
Telephone number	0191 4334079
Fax number	0191 4334078

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves an area which has significantly more social disadvantage than the average. The area is undergoing a period of regeneration and this has resulted in high levels of mobility both into and out of the school. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage, with a small proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion entitled to a free school meal. Children's skills on entry to the Nursery are much lower than that normally expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Inspirational leadership by the headteacher ensures that all staff and governors are fully committed to making a real difference to pupils' lives. They succeed very well in raising pupils' aspirations and preparing them for their future education. A pupil expressed very positive views of the school including, 'you taught me to be honest and to believe in me'.

Most children enter the school with very low social and academic skills. Their needs are very quickly identified and sensitively met through careful nurturing by Foundation Stage staff. They make excellent progress but academic standards remain low as they enter Key Stage 1. The rate of progress steadily increases as pupils move into Key Stage 2 and is excellent overall. As a result, in the 2006 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils attained standards that were above the national average. Given pupils' starting points, this means that achievement overall is outstanding.

Teaching is outstanding. Teachers deliver their lessons with the learning needs of each individual in mind. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to help pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who are at an early stage of learning English. Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour and lessons proceed at a fast pace. Pupils appreciate the support they receive and respond with excellent attitudes to learning and exemplary behaviour.

The well-being of each and every pupil is central to the work of the school. The outstanding curriculum is varied and stimulating. It is adapted very effectively to the regular changes in the school's population to meet pupils' different needs. Pupils willingly take a lead from staff as excellent role models and treat their classmates and others with dignity and respect whatever their race or gender. They feel safe and trust all the adults they deal with. Pupils know that their views are listened to and that they have a voice in the school. From an early age pupils learn about healthy foods and increasingly as pupils get older they engage in physical activities and find out more about healthy lifestyles. They clearly understand that with rights come responsibilities both for themselves and others in their community and beyond. Consequently their personal development is excellent.

The quality of self-evaluation is excellent. There are extensive systems to monitor everything that is happening in school. There is no complacency as the school builds on its strengths to improve standards and achievement. Thorough tracking of pupils' progress means that dips in performance are quickly identified and successfully tackled. The information gathered is used highly effectively to drive improvements, consequently significant improvement has been made since the last inspection which in turn has brought about higher standards. This demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage. An outstanding curriculum and teaching that is always good and often better provides an atmosphere in which children are cared for very well. A significant strength is the way that staff engage children in conversation, discussing their activities and moving them on in their thinking. The carefully organised day has an appropriate emphasis on the development of social skills. Children quickly gain in

independence through an effective balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Overall progress is excellent. The focus is clearly on extending children's speaking and listening skills and improving their social development. This establishes a firm foundation for learning as children transfer to Key Stage 1 and they are eager to learn more.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no major issues additional to those already identified in the current school improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

All pupils, whatever their ability, gender or ethnic backgrounds, achieve outstandingly well. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge significantly below those of other children of their age. Few have had any previous experience of books, with little or no knowledge of letters or numbers. Their social skills are very weak and many have poor behaviour. Overall progress in the Foundation Stage is excellent with the attention firmly on improving communication and personal and social skills. Despite good progress in literacy and numeracy children do not reach the level expected for their age.

In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in the development of basic skills so that by the end of Year 2 standards have risen but remain slightly below what is expected for this age. In Key Stage 2, the ground work in the early years really pays off and progress is excellent. As a result, in 2006 standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were above the national average. School records and inspection evidence confirm that in 2007 and in the current Year 6, pupils continue to make excellent progress from their very low start starting points and standards are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. As they move through the school, pupils flourish and grow in confidence. They respond with great enjoyment and enthusiasm to all that the school offers. Most pupils attend school regularly. Regeneration of the local area, however, and an ever changing school population means that despite the school's best efforts attendance figures remains stubbornly below the national average. This is because figures are adversely affected by the period when pupils move on but they remain on the school's records. Pupils behave very well and are sensitive to the needs of others. They believe bullying is not an issue at their school and fully understand how to keep themselves and others safe. They work maturely together in lessons and trained playground rangers ensure that no-one feels lonely at break and lunchtime. Pupils have a good understanding of how to follow a healthy lifestyle but are very honest when they say that they do not always make the right choices. They make an outstanding contribution to school life and to the wider community. For example, in the consideration of what is important for the local area, which they then discussed with the Minister for Urban Regeneration. With higher aspirations, the broadening of their horizons and the attainment of good basic skills, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for moving on to secondary school and for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching results in pupils' excellent progress. Well understood routines and high expectations together with very positive relationships contribute to outstanding learning. Pupils enjoy lessons because teachers treat them with respect, present activities in a stimulating way and make clear what they are expected to learn. Teachers make excellent use of assessment information to provide tasks which effectively meet the needs of pupils. Marking is of high quality. Pupils are fully aware of how well they are doing and receive detailed advice on how they can reach even higher standards. Older pupils take very seriously the opportunities to assess their own performance and this helps their teachers to make sure future work provides the correct level of challenge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Excellent provision for personal, social and health education and a strong and successful emphasis on promoting pupils' basic skills are two of the main reasons why pupils achieve outstandingly well. The school has adjusted the curriculum very effectively to meet pupils' particular needs. For example, the curriculum in Key Stage 1 is now centred on play-based learning which ensures a seamless transition from the Foundation Stage. The school is extending this good practice to Key Stage 2 by making the curriculum for the older pupils more imaginative and by combining subjects to make learning more purposeful. Already high standards can be seen in the quality of art work on display around the school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which play a particularly important role in ensuring pupils' health and well-being through additional exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school is an oasis of calm whose welcoming atmosphere is especially helpful in settling vulnerable pupils, such as those new to the school and to the English language. The inclusive, caring ethos of the school can be clearly seen in the value that pupils place on supporting each other. Close working relationships with a range of agencies contribute very well to the support provided to help pupils overcome their barriers to learning. Any pupils who are not doing as well as expected are quickly given extra help and support, consequently they quickly improve. All pupils are set challenging targets which are referred to regularly in lessons and clearly evident in displays around the classroom, together with tips for improvement. The very high standard of care is a significant factor in pupils' enjoyment of school, their sense of well-being and their outstanding achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leadership of the headteacher rightly gains the respect of staff, pupils and parents and is a significant feature in the school's success. Her

dedication and drive for improvement is reflected in an effective team of staff who are committed wholeheartedly to the interests of all pupils. They share a clear vision for the future success of the school and are determined that each individual will succeed as well as they can. Excellent monitoring and evaluation of the school's work ensure accurate self-evaluation and form the basis for the setting of challenging targets which are met and often exceeded. Frequent assessments of each pupil's attainment and progress are carefully analysed and used effectively to modify provision for groups or classes. Procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet national requirements and ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Governance is good. Governors are very committed to the school and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They are very supportive and their role in challenging the work of the school is developing well. The school provides outstanding value for money because resources, accommodation and staffing are used extremely well to the benefit of all pupils.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brandling Primary School, Gateshead, NE10 0JB.

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed talking to you and watching how hard you work in class. I agree with you that your school is outstanding and that your teachers work very hard to make sure that you have the best possible chances in life.

I was very pleased to see how well you all get along together and how much help and support you give to those who are new to your school. Your behaviour is excellent, you try your best and by the time you reach Year 6 you are all doing very well. This is because the staff keep a very careful eye on how well you are doing and give you all the help you need if you find anything difficult. Your headteacher is always looking for ways to make the school even better and I know that you and your parents have a great respect for all that she does.

Once again, thank you for all of your help and best wishes for the future.

Linda Buller

Lead Inspector