

Brayford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113153
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311127
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Gentle
Headteacher	Christine Bearman
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Brayford Barnstaple EX32 7QJ
Telephone number	01598 710345
Fax number	01598 710345

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school, where the great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is an above average turnover of pupils. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brayford Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. It has the strong support of parents, who appreciate the good levels of care their children receive. As one parent accurately wrote, 'Brayford provides a very happy environment where children learn and where we know that every child matters.' Pupils enjoy school, and their personal development and academic achievement are good. Satisfactory systems are in place to ensure pupils are safe. Because they feel secure and valued, pupils rapidly develop their confidence and self-esteem, attend regularly, and develop positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour is excellent at all times and pupils are courteous, treating others with respect.

Pupils' achievement has been improving over the past few years because the school evaluates its work accurately and has a clear view of what it needs to do to improve further. The wide range of management tasks, such as subject leadership, are shared effectively by a committed team of teachers. The headteacher provides good leadership and has won the strong support of parents. The governors provide good support and challenge for the school. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

Standards are broadly average, but vary substantially from year to year because of the very small number of pupils in each year group and the wide range of levels of attainment on entry. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because provision is well organised. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well. They make rapid progress in science and in developing their speaking, listening and reading skills. Progress in writing is slower. It has begun to improve because of the strategies the school has introduced. For example, spelling is becoming more accurate although there is further to go. However, the construction of complex sentences is an area of relative weakness. Marking and target setting, although satisfactory overall, do not provide pupils with clear enough guidance on how to improve this aspect of their work. Achievement in mathematics is good. Occasionally, pupils, especially the most able, do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in problem solving and mathematical investigations.

Well organised lessons, an interesting programme of work and good relationships contribute to pupils' good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes to the warm and friendly atmosphere in the school, where pupils show care for each other. They understand how to stay fit and healthy and join in playground games and extra-curricular sport with enthusiasm. As one parent, typical of many, wrote, 'Children really feel part of a community.' They take on responsibilities willingly and their well-developed social skills and good academic progress prepare them well for the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and it is well led and managed. Because there is good liaison with homes and with the adjoining pre-school, which many of the children attend, they settle quickly. Children achieve well, especially in developing their social and communication skills. Their progress is enhanced by mixing with older pupils and by the good levels of care provided by adults. Children's attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average although it varies significantly from year to year. Teaching is good. Occasionally, in whole class sessions, when children hesitate in their replies, the teacher answers the questions on their behalf, rather

than helping them to find the answer for themselves. Provision is flexible enough to meet children's needs, and arrangements for outdoor play, although not ideal because of the difficulties of supervising children from inside the classroom, are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that marking and target setting provide clear guidance to pupils on how to construct complex sentences.
- Raise standards and improve achievement in mathematics, especially for the most able pupils, by providing more opportunities to solve problems and to undertake mathematical investigations.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's levels of skills on entry to the Foundation Stage vary widely from year to year, representing the whole ability range, but are slightly below the expected level overall. Pupils achieve well from a wide variety of starting points. Those who join later during the school year also make good progress. Standards are broadly average overall, but vary widely from year to year. Speaking and listening skills develop well and pupils have a wide vocabulary. Progress in reading is rapid, and most pupils are fluent and confident readers by the time they leave. They enjoy reading and have strong opinions about the books they enjoy. They make slower progress in writing, because spelling and sentence level work are relative weaknesses. Spelling is beginning to improve because of the strategies the school has introduced in the current year. Pupils make good progress in mathematics, which has been a focus for improvement. Occasionally, pupils do not make as much progress as they might in problem solving and investigative work, especially the more able ones. Achievement in science is good, especially in the knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, shown through their confident participation in lessons and regular attendance. Their behaviour is excellent and they treat each other with good manners and respect, mixing well with pupils of different ages. Bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly when it occurs, so pupils feel secure. Pupils frequently assume responsibilities, for example by organising assemblies. However, they do not have enough opportunities to take the initiative in some aspects of their academic work, especially in investigative work in mathematics. They take an active part in decision making in school, such as taking part in the appointment of a new teacher, but are less aware of how the democratic process operates in society. They make a good contribution to the wider community, and have organised a meal and entertainment for local senior citizens. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay healthy, which they demonstrate through their sensible eating habits and keen participation in sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, through collaborative activities and presentations. Pupils participate confidently because of respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Behaviour is managed very well and lessons are calm and purposeful. Teachers' questioning is skilful, challenging pupils to be more precise in their answers and to pay careful attention to using subject specific vocabulary. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support groups of pupils in mixed age classes, including those with learning difficulties. Marking is satisfactory overall but it does not always provide clear enough guidance on the small steps pupils need to take to improve their work, especially in relation to writing complex sentences.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the learning needs of most pupils well. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Information and communication technology is used well to support work in other subjects. The reorganisation of the curriculum for mathematics and spelling has resulted in better achievement. However, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and to take part in investigations and problem solving activities. This occasionally limits achievement, especially of the most able pupils. There is a good range of activities, such as residential visits, to broaden pupils' experiences. Participation rates in the good range of extra-curricular activities the school provides are high. Personal, social and health education is effectively organised and contributes well to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

From the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils are provided with a good level of care, so that even the youngest children are confident and secure in mixed age classes. Sound procedures are in place to ensure pupils are safe. There is good liaison with other agencies to make sure pupils, especially those with learning difficulties, get the support they need. Academic guidance is satisfactory, but not all pupils know what their targets are and the small steps they need to take to reach them, especially in some aspects of writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported well by the staff, provides a clear sense of direction for the work of the school. Plans are prioritised sensibly and are based on a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, monitoring of teaching is occasionally insufficiently evaluative. Strategies have been introduced which have begun to improve achievement in writing and mathematics. Assessment, which has been a school priority, is now more effective. However, there is room for further improvement. The school has successfully addressed most of the issues from the previous inspection and achievement has improved since last year. The

school has good capacity to improve further. Governors provide good support and challenge for the school.

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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	2
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	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

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brayford Primary School, Brayford, EX32 7QJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed visiting your lessons. I also enjoyed listening to the assembly presented by Year 6 pupils. I was interested to hear your views about the school. Most of your parents and carers took the trouble to reply to the questionnaire sent by the school, many of them writing notes and letters, so please discuss this letter with them. You and your parents are very proud of your school, so you will be pleased to know that it provides you with a good education, from the Foundation Stage onwards.

You achieve well, making good progress in your learning and in all aspects of your personal development throughout the school, right from when you start in the Foundation Stage. You do especially well in developing your reading, speaking and listening skills and in extending your knowledge and understanding of science. Skills in writing and mathematics are improving because of the changes the school has made. Spelling is improving, but there is more work to do, so carry on trying hard. You have good attitudes to learning and your excellent behaviour helps you to make good progress. You treat others with care, respect and good manners.

Your good progress is also a result of good teaching and you enjoy a programme of activities that interests you. You enjoy taking part in the extra activities the school provides for you. Adults in school take good care of you, so you develop confidence and feel secure. The headteacher and staff are working hard to make sure the school keeps on improving.

We have asked the school to:

- help you to improve your writing by making sure that marking and your targets provide you with clear guidance on how to make your sentences more complex
- help you to improve in mathematics, especially those of you who find work easy, by providing more opportunities to solve problems and to do more mathematical investigations.

Best wishes

Marion Thompson Lead inspector