

Bratton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126178
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315430
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Pollock
Headteacher	David Brown
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Westbury Road Bratton Westbury BA13 4RL
Telephone number	01380 830511
Fax number	01380 830977

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bratton Primary School is smaller than most primary schools and has one class in each year group. There has been a significant turnover of staff over the past two years and there are still some temporary arrangements in place. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

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 education for its pupils. It has been through a difficult period, partly due to staffing instability, when standards in English, mathematics and science declined and a significant proportion of pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, were underachieving. Additional support from the local authority and recent determined action by senior leaders have proved successful in halting the decline. The majority of pupils are now making the progress that they should. The exception is in the Reception Year. Children start school with skills in line with expectations but do not reach the levels that they should by the end of the year. There have been improvements during this year, resulting in good progress in areas such as reading. However, there are still weaknesses in the progress made in writing and in the development of children's creative skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

A key reason for the improvement in Years 1 to 6 has been the introduction of more rigorous systems for assessing pupils' progress and providing extra support for those who are not making the gains that they should. Pupils themselves are gaining a clear view of what they need to do to improve through the marking of their work and the individual targets that they are given. Analysis of pupils' performance in national and optional tests is identifying specific aspects of their learning that need further work. Much of this is still at the early stages but it is beginning to bear fruit and ensure that planning and teaching are more sharply focused on areas that need to be improved.

All aspects of provision are satisfactory. Weak teaching has been eradicated and planning for literacy and numeracy has been improved. As a result, standards are now broadly average at the end of Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in English are better than in mathematics, because in the latter more able pupils do not always reach the levels that they should. While standards in writing are improving, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills by writing for a range of purposes in subjects across the curriculum.

Pupils are known well as individuals and their personal development is good. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities that they have to participate in clubs and special events such as 'Book Week'. The vast majority of pupils behave well, show good concern for the welfare of others and are sensitive to those who have specific needs or difficulties. They enjoy school life and participate enthusiastically in a wide variety of sports-related activities. They have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and staying safe.

While several parents are positive about all aspects of the school, a significant proportion lack confidence, particularly in relation to leadership and management. The inspection found that these aspects are satisfactory but changes in staffing arrangements and the recent decline in standards have understandably caused anxiety for many parents. Communication systems are being strengthened by, for example, governors making themselves regularly accessible to parents so that any concerns can be discussed. The school's recent success in tackling a significant degree of underachievement demonstrates that it has sound capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Over the past three years, children have not made the progress that they should in the Reception Year. There have been improvements in the learning environment this year, particularly in the

use of the outdoor area. As a result, children are doing well in some aspects of their learning. Many show good concentration in practical activities and enjoy working together. Their physical development and aspects of their personal development are good. A new programme for teaching letters and sounds is having a good impact in accelerating their progress in reading. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to write independently and there is a lack of structure to teach key skills in this area. Their creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are also limited. This is partly the result of poor resources for these areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage for the teaching of writing and for supporting children's creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world to ensure that progress is at least satisfactory in these areas.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes in subjects across the curriculum.
- Raise standards in mathematics and, in particular, ensure that more able pupils make quicker progress and reach the levels that they should.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Past underachievement has been tackled successfully and the majority of pupils in Years 1 to 6 are making at least satisfactory progress. In Years 2, 5 and 6, many pupils are making gains at a good rate, which is helping to make up for slow progress in previous years. Standards have improved and current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain at least average levels. However, there is still work to do to raise standards further. Throughout the school, pupils could be doing better in writing. In mathematics, more able pupils in particular could achieve more. The school is having some success in improving achievement in science through more work that encourages pupils to use and extend their scientific knowledge in practical situations. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make sound progress against their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils work together amicably, as was evident when they shared ideas eagerly in several lessons. Most understand the need for fair play and respect the feelings of others. They respond well to opportunities to take on responsibility as monitors or as members of the school council. The influence of the school council has been somewhat limited this year but there are plans to extend its involvement in contributing views and ideas about possible developments in the school. Pupils are involved in a range of fund raising activities and enjoy participating in local events. Links with Africa and events such as 'arts week' contribute to their good spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' steady progress in key skills in literacy and numeracy ensure sound preparation for the next stage of their education and their future lives. Attendance is satisfactory but affected by the lengthy absences of a small number of children and families taking holidays in term-time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons run smoothly and pupils are managed well. Teachers generally share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils and give them clear explanations to help them to understand new ideas. There is good teaching in some year groups but this is not yet consistently established throughout the school. At times lessons lack pace and not enough is covered in the time available. Expectations of what pupils might achieve are not always high enough and there are occasions when more able pupils mark time. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is being adapted in order to raise standards and recent initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact. Opportunities for pupils to write at length have been improved, although these are still limited in subjects other than English. There is more investigative work in science and mental work in mathematics to boost attainment in these areas. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been improved significantly since the last inspection so that pupils have regular opportunities to use ICT for a range of purposes. The school is justifiably proud of its participation in a local sports partnership and gaining healthy school status, which contribute to pupils' good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe in school and know that staff will listen to them if they have any problems. There are good links with local agencies to provide extra support for pupils where necessary. Thorough induction procedures, including home visits, help children to settle into the Reception class. Good links with the local secondary school support the transition of pupils at the end of Year 6. Academic guidance has been improved and individual pupils' progress is being reviewed regularly. Most pupils know their targets in literacy and numeracy and this is beginning to accelerate their progress. Marking has improved so that pupils are being given a clear view of what they have done well and what they need to work on next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have established a clear direction for school improvement and implemented a range of initiatives to raise standards. Work has gone on to achieve better consistency in approaches to teaching and learning and this is resulting in an overall improvement in the quality. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are being used well to identify those who are not on track and to target extra support to help them to make up lost ground. Senior leaders check on the effectiveness of what is being done through observing lessons and monitoring planning and pupils' work. Monitoring is becoming more focused and the information gained is beginning to be used well to target specific areas for further improvement. Not enough attention has been paid to the Foundation Stage and this has led to weaknesses in provision for some aspects

of learning and impacted on children's achievement. Several governors are new but are keen to support the school and are undertaking training. Individual governors are regularly involved in reviewing the school's progress in improving its overall effectiveness.

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

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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

20 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bratton Primary School, Bratton, Westbury BA13 4RL

You may remember that we visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who explained what you were doing in lessons and what goes on in school. A special thank you to those who gave up some of their lunch break to talk with us. I thought you would be interested in what we are saying in your report. Your school provides you with a sound education and there is a lot of activity going on to improve the work that it does. This is very important because in the past some of you have not made the progress that you should in some year groups, but you are now catching up with things that you missed earlier.

Your teachers are making changes to the way lessons are planned and the way that your work is marked and this is helping to move your learning on more quickly. Several of you told us how much you like the 'tickled pink' marking that shows what you have done well.

We were impressed with the way older pupils take on responsibilities to help the school run smoothly. You know how to keep fit and healthy and you enjoy lots of sports, clubs and special events in school. You usually behave well and many of you are very kind and helpful to others. You work well together in lots of lessons.

We have suggested three things that need to be improved.

- Children in the Reception class need to make quicker progress in learning to write and they need more opportunities for things like role-play and learning about the wider world.
- You are writing more in your English lessons but need to be able to write up your ideas and findings in all the subjects that you study.
- You could be doing better in mathematics, especially if you are quick to learn.

You can help by working hard to achieve your targets.

Thank you again for your help.

Best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead inspector

Annex B

20 May 2008

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Best wishes

Shirley Billington
Lead inspector