

Albert Bradbeer Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131759
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	315863
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	David Rzeznik HMI

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	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wal Suett
Headteacher	Colin Smith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Turves Green Northfield Birmingham B31 4RD
Telephone number	01214 642356
Fax number	01214 642990

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Albert Bradbeer is a large primary school that opened in September 2006 following the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school on the same site. The headteacher is the former headteacher of the infant school. Around a third of the teachers are newly appointed. The governing body was established in January 2007. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small number are from Asian, Black or mixed backgrounds, but none are at the early stages of acquiring English. The percentage claiming free schools meals is much higher than normal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements, is above average. The school provides out-of-school and holiday care. The provision is managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection by the childcare inspectorate. There are plans to open a Children's Centre on site sometime during 2008.

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 standard of education and is in a sound position to improve further. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and very effective in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). When the school opened, senior staff and governors quickly realised that there was a legacy of underachievement in some years. This meant that standards were not as high as they could be, particularly in English and mathematics. There was much catching up to do in both of these subjects. Determined leadership tackled the most important weaknesses first with successful results. There has been a substantial improvement in pupils' behaviour and a rise in the proportion of satisfactory or better teaching. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. As a result, standards have started to rise, particularly in Year 2. Whilst the school's self-evaluation procedures are sound, senior staff are not yet systematic enough in evaluating the impact of initiatives to see how effective they are. Pupils' progress is being tracked but assessment systems are not robust enough to pinpoint how well different groups are achieving. Teachers have received training about how to evaluate pupils' attainment but their judgements about standards are not always accurate. As a result, the data collected is not sufficiently secure to establish a baseline from which pupils' attainment and progress can be measured. Governors have ensured that all but one of the statutory requirements have been met. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. The school's first set of results in 2007 indicate that standards in Years 2 and 6 were broadly average. Achievement is now satisfactory but inconsistent within subjects and across years. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well in all areas of learning. Pupils' listening skills are developing well but too many lack fluency and confidence when speaking. Spelling, punctuation and mathematical skills are insufficiently developed and this is hindering pupils' ability to succeed. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. There is some good teaching in Years 1 to 6 but not enough. Inconsistencies in teaching, and the use of assessment, mean that work is not always effectively matched to pupils' capabilities in these years. Pupils' social and moral development is good. Their personal, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound understanding of their own culture; however, their knowledge and understanding about cultural diversity are limited. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Attendance is below average but improving. There remains a minority of pupils who do not come to school regularly enough. Pupils are well cared for and receive satisfactory academic support and guidance. Parents hold positive views about the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The leadership of the Foundation Stage is strong and the excellent standards of care and safety help children to feel happy and secure from the minute they set foot in school. Children love coming to school because there are plenty of interesting and worthwhile things to do. A good balance is struck between children learning for themselves and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults. Robust checks are made on children's progress and assessment information is used well to ensure that work builds on previous learning. The quality of teaching is consistently good because teachers match learning activities well to the needs of all children. Consequently, they make good progress across all areas of learning. By the time they begin Year 1, most have reached the expected levels for their age having started in the Nursery with attainment below the level expected. The 'Top Start' programme for physical education and the well equipped

and effectively used outdoor areas enable children to make excellent progress in their physical development. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to children's learning. The impact of provision is effectively evaluated. The school has recently identified that the more capable children's progress in understanding the shape aspects of mathematics is just satisfactory and not as fast as other areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, and ensure pupils' speaking skills are developed through all subjects.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and make better use of assessment information to ensure that work is closely matched to all pupils' capabilities in order that they make good progress.
- Track pupils' progress more effectively and accurately to determine the attainment and achievement of different groups and ensure the impact of initiatives is fully evaluated.
- Ensure the school fulfils its statutory duty to hold a daily act of collective worship. A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When children enter the Nursery their knowledge and skills are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning because they are taught well and the curriculum effectively meets their needs. By the time children leave Reception, most reach the standards expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory but inconsistent within subjects and across years. For example, last academic year the oldest pupils made good progress in English and mathematics. In contrast, in Years 4 and 5 pupils' progress was uneven with some pockets of underperformance in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were broadly average. In Year 2 there was a marked increase in the number of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels of the National Curriculum. Year 6 boys attained higher standards than boys nationally in English and science. Girls' attainment was slightly behind girls' attainment nationally, especially in English and mathematics. Analysis of current school data shows that the gap between how the pupils are doing and what they are capable of is beginning to close. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make the progress expected of them. The wholeschool targets set for the oldest pupils are realistic and appropriately challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and are positive about the things that they do. They are friendly, welcoming and answered inspectors' questions frankly and honestly. In lessons, pupils collaborate well, listen attentively and give of their best. When the school opened, there was universal agreement that behaviour was not good enough. Effective behaviour management strategies were quickly put into place with very positive results. Behaviour is now good in lessons and around the school. Pupils say they are free from harassment and on the few occasions when bullying occurs it is generally dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils make a good contribution to school life and to the wider community. For example, older pupils carrying out

responsibilities as 'playground pals' do a great job. They ensure that the youngest children play productively and that any worries or concerns they might have are quickly sorted out so that they feel safe and secure. A good deal of money is raised for charitable causes, especially for Marie Curie, Starlight, Red Nose Day and the British Heart Foundation. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, with more choosing a healthy meal for lunch and fewer eating junk food at break time than in the past. Attendance is below average but improving. It is not as high as it could be because a small minority of pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. Focused work with parents has led to attendance increasing from 92.6% to 93.6% in the past year. There has also been a reduction in the number of pupils who attend for less than 85% of the time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is not enough that is of consistently good quality. The key strengths are that teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and form good relationships with them, helping to create a supportive climate for learning. Teaching assistants are effectively used, particularly supporting those who find learning difficult. A good feature is the sharing of objectives at the beginning of lessons so that pupils know what is expected of them. In the main, pupils undertake activities prescribed by the teacher rather than working on tasks that require them to make decisions and use their initiative. This means pupils do not yet have enough opportunity to develop the skills of independence by taking responsibility for what and how they learn. The most effective lessons are characterised by high expectations and challenging activities that move pupils' learning forward at a fast rate. Where teaching is satisfactory it is generally because insufficient use is made of assessment information to ensure that work is properly matched to pupils' differing capabilities. On occasions, pupils are given unproductive and mundane activities to do and this means time is not used wisely. Marking is good. It informs pupils about what they are doing well and what must be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum is interesting and varied. Adults plan a wide range of worthwhile and stimulating learning activities indoors and outside. In Years 1 to 6 a strong emphasis is given to developing pupils' English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology skills. It is right to do so in order to address the legacy of underachievement, especially in literacy and numeracy. Catchup intervention programmes have had a positive impact, particularly in improving the reading skills of the least able. Curriculum planning is much improved. The adoption of national guidance in all subject areas has led to a greater coherence and continuity in pupils' learning. This said, curriculum planning does not yet give enough detail about how the needs of the more and least able pupils will be met. The developing range of after school clubs, which are well supported, adds to pupils' enjoyment of learning. The provision promotes and develops pupils' interests and participation in sport and music. Residential trips in Years 5 and 6 help to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for. Arrangements for assessing hazards, managing risks and ensuring pupils' safety in school and on visits are excellent. The required checks are made on staff to confirm their suitability to work with children. Pupils in danger of exclusion are effectively supported. For example, the nurture provision successfully helps those with social and emotional problems to cooperate with others, control their emotions and to listen and follow instructions consistently. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The marking of writing clearly identifies persistent weaknesses in spelling and punctuation, but these are not being rectified at a fast enough rate. Pupils are aware of their English and mathematics targets but do not know which National Curriculum level they are working at and what needs to be done to reach the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Much has been done in the first year of the school's life. The headteacher and governors have successfully welded two schools into one. There is a clear and well understood vision based around the 'WE CAN' (Citizenship, Aspiration and Nurture) philosophy. Self-evaluation procedures are sound and enable senior staff and governors to have a clear understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Prioritisation for action has been good. For example, ineffective teaching was identified and appropriate action taken to bring about improvement. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated. A restructuring of responsibilities has led to middle managers being more accountable for provision within subjects and phases. They have started to judge the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' achievement by scrutinising work and teachers' planning. There is a united sense of purpose amongst staff that is getting to grips with the most important areas for improvement. The school improvement plan is satisfactory. It clearly maps out the priorities for the year ahead. However, it lacks detail about when initiatives will be monitored and by whom. Senior staff are not yet systematic enough in evaluating the impact of initiatives to see how effective they are. Pupils' progress is tracked and the information gained has been used to inform intervention. However, performance data are not analysed effectively enough to identify how well different groups are achieving. Teachers are not yet evaluating the standards achieved securely enough. Financial management is sound. The school has a substantial budget surplus, primarily because the previous infant and junior schools carried forward much larger budget surpluses than normal. Satisfactory plans are in place to spend the money on improving accommodation, the provision of computers and implementing workforce reforms.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 2 November 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Albert Bradbeer Primary School, Birmingham, B31 4RD Hello, I am one of the inspectors that visited your school. I am writing to tell you what we found out. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being so open and honest when answering our questions. We have judged that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are the good things that we found out about your school.
- Your new school has got off to a good start. Your teachers and governors have successfully merged two schools into one.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are doing really well and are enjoying their learning.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. You told inspectors you enjoy school and there is always someone to turn to if you have a worry or concern.
- The playground pals and school council are making a good contribution to school life. You raise money for various charities and this improves the lives of others. Inspectors were pleased to see many more of you choosing healthy options at lunch and break times. We have asked the headteacher and governors to improve four things.
- To help you make better progress and reach higher standards in English and mathematics. We also want teachers to improve your speaking skills.
- To improve teaching and assessment. You need to make better progress and the best way is to make sure you are taught well. Teachers must make better use of the information they have about your performance so that you are always given challenging work to do.
- We want the headteacher, staff and governors to keep a better check on how well you and the school are performing.
- Governors must ensure that each day there is an act of collective worship. You are very fortunate that you go to a caring school where everyone gets on so well. I hope you will continue to work hard, and give of your best, in order to make the school even better. Best Wishes David Rzeznik Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

Annex B

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Best Wishes
David Rzeznik
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools