

West Town Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132150
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	315939
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Geoff Burgess

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	406
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue James
Headteacher	Jeremy Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	West Town Lane Brislington BS4 5DT
Telephone number	01173 772295
Fax number	01173 772296

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school, created by amalgamating adjoining infant and junior schools in 2006, serves an area of mixed housing in the south of Bristol. The majority of pupils are White British and almost all speak English as their first language. A broadly average number of pupils have been identified as needing help with their learning. This includes a wide range of needs but in most cases, these are connected with the development of literacy skills. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most children start school with attainment at the level 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: 3

This satisfactory primary school has, in a relatively short time, made commendable progress in combining the infant and junior schools which had served the community for many years. It has established a common ethos and ways of working and promoted growing confidence within the school and local communities. Good use has been made of the opportunities presented to raise expectations and develop the school's facilities and provision. Parents are very pleased that all the staff 'have dealt with these changes very professionally' and feel that they have 'done an excellent job in integrating the two schools ... so that all children can learn'. However, the school acknowledges that many new ways of working need more time to become fully effective in improving outcomes.

The staff have worked hard to develop provision and make it consistent throughout the school and there are now strengths in several areas. Children are given a good start in the Reception classes, where they are making good progress in all areas of learning. The school's efforts to make learning an adventure have resulted in it developing a good range of learning activities which interest and motivate pupils. Pastoral care is good. A parent notes, 'The whole ethos of the school benefits all the pupils and provides a safe, caring environment for them'. Much has been done to develop the buildings and grounds and provide opportunities for work and play. A parent speaks for many when she says she is 'pleased that the school provides an excellent, nurturing and stimulating environment for learning'. As a consequence of all this, pupils are very happy in school, they all get on well together, their behaviour is good and they know what it takes to be healthy, fit and safe.

Overall, satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils are currently making satisfactory progress in almost all classes and standards are average. However, the quality of teaching is not yet consistent throughout the school and so it has begun the process of bringing all teaching up to the good levels seen in most classrooms. Parents' views on teaching are mixed, with a few being unhappy while the majority are delighted with the way teachers have 'inspired, motivated and enthused our children'. Pupils who find learning difficult are well supported and their progress matches that of their classmates.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has put in place systems for monitoring pupils' work, tracking their progress and setting learning targets. These are effective in collecting and recording data but the school is aware that, other than in the Foundation Stage, it is not yet making full use of this information to raise expectations, increase challenge and focus efforts where they are most needed.

The leadership and management team of the school were confronted by a massive agenda when the two schools amalgamated. Change was necessary, but it had to be made in ways which brought the school together and at a pace which the community could manage. This has very largely been achieved to the great credit of the whole staff, but especially the headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher. All the necessary systems and procedures are in place and working. Roles and responsibilities are clear. However, the school is aware that developing the role of subject and other leaders remains a priority. Given the very strong foundations laid, and the growing self-confidence and ambition in the school community, the school is in a good position to build on the many improvements already made.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enjoy a wide range of carefully planned activities in the Reception classes and, because their progress is carefully monitored, they make good progress. Most will move into Year 1 with attainment in all areas broadly as expected for children of this age. Parents of children who have just started school are very pleased with the provision being made. One speaks for many in saying, 'The daily activities have been varied and fun, making school an exciting place to be'. The well-equipped and organised classrooms are very well presented, with eye-catching displays which make the whole environment attractive to young children. An early priority for the new school was to provide a covered area for outside work and play; this is much enjoyed and very well used.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils have similarly good opportunities to learn by making teaching good in each year group and parallel class.
- Raise expectations for pupil achievement by making better use of the school's assessment and tracking procedures to provide work that challenges pupils of all ages and abilities.
- Give all leaders and managers the opportunity and support to enable them to make a full contribution to developing their areas of responsibility.

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

Standards are average. The results of national tests taken during the school's first year were disappointing. Boys especially made less progress than expected, particularly in mathematics and science, and standards were below average in these subjects. However, the school's records and pupils' work show that the school's actions have brought about a significant improvement this year in almost all year groups. The school looks to be well on track to achieve targets in Year 6, which would mean that standards would be above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Targets for pupils lower down the school are even more challenging. Pupils' work since September shows that while this varies in some classes, overall achievement is now satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils respect each other and know what is right and wrong. Behaviour is good in almost all lessons and at playtimes. Pupils who find difficulty in behaving appropriately are well supported by well-trained and skilled lunchtime staff. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe and know to whom they can turn should a problem occur. Pupils know how to achieve a healthy lifestyle and eagerly take part in a wide range of physical activities, including at lunchtime and after school. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community through the very active School Council, which provides pupils with a voice in the community. A young member proudly states, 'We speak for the other

children in the school'. Eco Warriors take the lead on energy saving and recycling. Pupils are confident to lead and work together with others as group members. They readily take on responsibilities such as organising games and activities for younger pupils to play well together. Pupils cooperate well and have adequate academic and social skills to take them on to their next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In almost all lessons, teachers provide work well matched to pupils' interests and capabilities. The majority of lessons capture pupils' attention and they respond with enjoyment and an eagerness to learn. However, occasionally the work does not match the needs and abilities of all the children. Consequently, their progress can be limited, and some lose interest. Marking, which is usually good, is based on the learning objective of the lesson and indicates how pupils can improve. Assessment and recording procedures are now being used to modify planning but, as yet, they are not being used consistently enough in all classes. Routines are well established, with checklists and reminders, and the purpose of lessons is clear. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and relationships are very positive, helped by well-informed teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Over the past year, teachers, children and other adults have developed a curriculum which combines and links subjects together to address the vision of 'learning as an adventure'. It is extremely well planned and evaluated, using themes and links to create excitement and adventure, and yet still enables subject leaders and classroom teachers to ensure that all pupils cover what is necessary. Pupils enjoy the activities, one saying, 'going to school is like a surprise'. Activities are adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and gifted and talented pupils. Pupils take part in a good range of enrichment activities, though some parents would like more. Visits and visitors are used very well to boost learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care provides pupils with an environment in which they feel safe and supported. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils are thorough, and rigorous health and safety checks occur regularly. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. With arrangements for tracking progress at an early stage of development, information gained from the analysis of assessment data is not yet used consistently enough to ensure that work stretches pupils of all abilities. The school sets individual targets for learning, but younger pupils especially are not sufficiently aware of what they are, or the progress they are making towards achieving them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The process of creating a primary school with its own identity by combining the infant and junior schools has required a wide range of leadership and management skills. Most important was the creation of a vision shared by the whole school community and the need to bring policies and procedures together. This has largely been achieved though, in many cases, time will be needed to embed the changes and make them fully effective. Part of this process has been the ongoing evaluation of what is working and what needs to be changed. This has been effective in setting an agenda which has been flexible enough to cope with constantly changing circumstances. A good example of this was observed during the inspection, with workmen on site laying the foundations for the school's new connecting entrance. The new governing body has taken up its role with commitment and enthusiasm. With an experienced chair to lead them, governors have been closely involved in all developments and have shown themselves to be very willing to question and challenge. A key priority for the school is the need to make all subject and other leaders as effective as possible in their roles.

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	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	2

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	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?	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?	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**

8 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Mrs Hargreaves, Mr Goodall and I would like to thank you for your friendly welcome to your school on our recent visit. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching all the interesting activities your teachers had planned for you. Most of all, we were very impressed with the way you all dressed up as fictional characters for World Book Day. You all looked fantastic. We think your new school is satisfactory, but we also think everyone has done really well to make it such a happy place and that you have everything in place to improve.

These are the good things we found:

- Children in the Reception classes enjoy school and do well.
- You behave well, enjoy learning, work hard and do your best.
- Everybody gets on very well together.
- Your teachers and helpers work hard to help you learn.
- They arrange a good range of extra activities for you to enjoy.
- The things you do in class are interesting and fun.
- You know you are safe and that there is always someone to turn to.
- We know you appreciate all the grown-ups do to make sure your time in school is as happy as possible.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do:

- Make sure that you all have the same opportunity to learn by making teaching similarly good in each class.
- Plan work and set you targets that are a little bit harder each year so that by the time you leave, you have made even better progress.
- Make it possible for all your teachers to make the things they are responsible for in school as good as they can make them.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and do your best. Again, thank you for all you do to make your school as good as it is. It was a pleasure for me to share it with you for a short time.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Burgess Lead Inspector