

Bantock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132197
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	315962
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catrin Lester
Headteacher	Patricia Bull
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2003
School address	Aston Street Penn Fields Wolverhampton WV3 0HY
Telephone number	01902 558710
Fax number	01902 558711

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school that has pupils from 29 countries who speak 31 different languages. The attainment of children on entering the Nursery is very low, particularly in their language and social skills. There is a high proportion of pupils whose first language is other than English and a large majority of these are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils who join or leave school during the year is very high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has some outstanding features. At the centre of its success are the drive and vision of the headteacher, which ensures that the school's motto of 'Learning through friendship' is fully met. Bantock is very much a multi-cultural school, with pupils arriving at any time in the school year, in any year group and from anywhere around the world. Leadership and management have created an atmosphere in which all pupils feel valued and cherished within a very friendly learning environment. One pupil's comment captures the views of many, 'This is a really good school in which learning English links us together as a family.' Although standards are below average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, this represents good achievement from the pupils' very low starting points on entering school. Pupils make good progress through the school and it is the very high turnover of pupils in all classes that depresses overall standards. The school's data clearly show that pupils who remain in school from Nursery to Year 6 achieve very well and attain standards broadly in line with the national average in all three subjects. Standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 have been declining in recent years and reflect the fact that more pupils are starting school with little or no English. A good variety of strategies has been put into place to bring about improvement. However, these have not been evaluated rigorously enough to see if they are being successful in raising pupils' achievement. A weaker aspect of pupils' performance through the school is their lack of ability in solving word problems in mathematics. This is because there is not enough emphasis placed on pupils understanding and using correct mathematical vocabulary to better develop their skills in this area. The school places much emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills, and their cultural development is excellent. Pupils show an outstanding ability to understand and value the beliefs and traditions of others from backgrounds different from their own within a culturally diverse environment. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and make a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons and are obviously keen to learn. They behave in an exemplary manner and are caring and considerate to others. As a result, teachers are able to concentrate fully on developing pupils' skills rather than having to spend time managing misbehaviour. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to ensure that the needs of pupils of different abilities are met effectively. The curriculum is tailored well to meet the needs and aspirations of all pupils. Of particular note is the wide range of out-of-school activities that effectively extend pupils' learning experiences. The whole-school ethos centres on care and support for others and this is evident in the very strong pastoral support for all pupils. All staff are firmly committed to ensuring pupils' health and safety. The procedures for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive, with all staff fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school and greatly value the way in which their children are cared for. One parental comment is typical of many, 'Bantock is a very happy school and the teachers work well as a team to do their best for all the children.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school provides children with a happy and secure environment in which to work and play. Many of them start school with little or no English and poor social skills, and so a high priority is placed upon developing these areas. The success of this can be seen in the way children quickly settle into daily routines and show interest and enjoyment in developing their English language skills. They grow in confidence and are happy to work with others in pairs and small

groups. Staff work well as a team to ensure that learning is tailored well to individual need. As a result, children make good progress across all areas of learning. Though children are working below the levels expected on entering Year 1, particularly in language and mathematical development, this represents good achievement from their low starting point. The school acknowledges the need to develop the external area to provide better exploration and investigational play opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Place more emphasis on pupils understanding and using key mathematical vocabulary to better develop their ability to solve word problems in the subject.
- More rigorously evaluate the strategies recently introduced to raise standards in reading in Years 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school works hard to overcome the difficulties posed by the pupils' low attainment on entry and the very high turnover of pupils in each class during the year. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. However, the school is not complacent and is determined to drive up standards to at least the national average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Currently they are below average in all three subjects. For example, a variety of strategies has been put into place to improve standards in reading in Years 1 and 2. These include a new reading scheme and the introduction of a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics. The impact of these initiatives has not been evaluated. A weaker aspect of pupils' performance in mathematics is their lack of ability to understand and apply mathematical vocabulary to solve word problems in the subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are respectful, polite and proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about learning because of the very positive relationships with adults in school. However, despite the school's best efforts, a persistent minority do not attend regularly enough. Pupils are very friendly and show care and consideration for others. They are happy to take on responsibility, such as being a member of the school council. They also have a good understanding of the value of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. This is shown in their enjoyment of the Tai Chi lessons in Years 5 and 6, with pupils saying it relaxes them and makes them more flexible. They are aware of how to stay safe, such as by using sharp tools carefully in design and technology lessons. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community through being involved in a variety of events, including choir visits to local homes for the elderly. They are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers manage lessons very well, making clear their expectations of hard work and good behaviour. They make lessons fun and pupils respond positively because they enjoy their activities, respect their teachers and are keen to please them. The high quality of relationships

evident between staff and children has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to meet the needs of pupils, and work set is generally matched closely to their different abilities. However, there are occasions when pupils who are more able find their work too easy. Not enough emphasis is placed on developing pupils' understanding and use of key mathematical vocabulary to enable them to solve word problems more effectively. Teachers ensure pupils understand the purpose of each lesson to help them be focused and to keep check on their own progress through their target sheets. Teaching assistants are creatively deployed and work well with teachers to provide effective support for all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes a good contribution to the progress and personal development of the pupils because it is constantly evaluated and modified in the light of the everchanging school population. As a result, there is good provision for pupils whose first language is other than English and for new arrivals to the school. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is planned effectively to broaden and enrich children's experiences. The programme for personal development successfully promotes a good understanding of staying safe, keeping healthy and how to become responsible citizens. A wide range of school clubs and educational visits that includes residential stays for pupils in Years 1 to 6 effectively enriches the curriculum. These have a positive impact on pupils' social development. There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and use of key mathematical vocabulary in problem-solving activities. Good links with others, such as professional sports coaches, further extend pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school ensures there are effective procedures to keep pupils safe and staff are trained to implement them. Pupils know they can approach any adult in school if they have a problem. The school has a gold inclusion award and this is reflected in the outstandingly inclusive ways pupils are supported in their learning. Teaching assistants play an important role in this and are deployed well to support pupils' individual needs. There are very good links with external agencies to provide extra support for pupils when needed. The school has good systems for checking the progress that pupils make. This is especially important given the ever-changing nature of the school population. The information collected is generally used well to set targets for individual pupils to improve their work. However, it is not always used as effectively to guide pupils to improve their problem-solving skills in mathematics. Pupils are aware of their targets and of the steps they need to take to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team (SLT) have effectively developed a strong team ethos throughout the school. As a result, all staff are firmly committed to pupils developing their academic and creative skills as well as they can. The SLT have worked hard to ensure that inclusion and equality of opportunity permeate all policies, schemes of work and practice. This has led to a harmonious school in which pupils from many different cultural backgrounds work and play together in a very friendly manner. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and systems for

checking the progress that pupils make are efficient. Consequently, the school is able to set pupils challenging targets for them to achieve. Some coordinators are not proactive enough in leading their subjects. The school is providing training to help them develop their roles. Governors play a valuable role in helping the school move forward. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the capacity for further improvement is good.

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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	3
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	3

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?	2

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	1
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

- 1 October 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Bantock Primary School, Wolverhampton WV3 0HY
Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were so friendly and keen to talk to us about what you do in school. I would like to tell you we consider your school to be a good one. It helps you to achieve well, though standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. Your personal development is good and you behave in an excellent manner. We especially like the way you are so polite and show care and consideration for others. It was such a joy to see pupils from so many different cultural backgrounds getting on so well together. Teachers make sure your lessons are interesting and are good at asking questions to make you think hard. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not do as well in reading as in other areas of learning. Some changes have been introduced to raise your achievement in reading but they have not been fully checked to see if they are being successful. Your skills in solving word problems in mathematics are not as good as they could be. You told us you have many interesting and exciting things to do at school. You said you especially enjoy the many sporting and musical activities that you can take part in. All adults take very good care of you and ensure you are safe while in school. You told us that if you have any worries or concerns you can talk to an adult and are confident you would be listened to. The people in charge of the school do a good job and work hard to improve your school even further. What I have asked your school to do now:
 - Better develop your skills in solving word problems in mathematics.
 - Closely check if changes introduced to improve your reading are being successful. I hope you continue to enjoy your learning and remain kind to others in the future. Best wishes
Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector

Annex B

1 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bantock Primary School, Wolverhampton WV3 0HY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were so friendly and keen to talk to us about what you do in school. I would like to tell you we consider your school to be a good one. It helps you to achieve well, though standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science.

Your personal development is good and you behave in an excellent manner. We especially like the way you are so polite and show care and consideration for others. It was such a joy to see pupils from so many different cultural backgrounds getting on so well together. Teachers make sure your lessons are interesting and are good at asking questions to make you think hard. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not do as well in reading as in other areas of learning. Some changes have been introduced to raise your achievement in reading but they have not been fully checked to see if they are being successful. Your skills in solving word problems in mathematics are not as good as they could be.

You told us you have many interesting and exciting things to do at school. You said you especially enjoy the many sporting and musical activities that you can take part in. All adults take very good care of you and ensure you are safe while in school. You told us that if you have any worries or concerns you can talk to an adult and are confident you would be listened to. The people in charge of the school do a good job and work hard to improve your school even further.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Better develop your skills in solving word problems in mathematics.
- Closely check if changes introduced to improve your reading are being successful.

I hope you continue to enjoy your learning and remain kind to others in the future.

Best wishes

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector