

Bracebridge Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120428
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327281
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Cousins

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Neville Jackson
Headteacher	Mrs Marie Denham
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2006
School address	Francis Street Bracebridge Lincoln Lincolnshire LN5 8QG
Telephone number	01522 520591
Fax number	01522 520591
Email address	Enquiries@bracebridge.lincs.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited all classrooms, observed seven part lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at some documentation, pupils' work and displays and scrutinised parent questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following:

- do boys in Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in writing and calculation and are pupils' attitudes and dispositions a real strength?
- how do leaders' monitor the progress and attainment in KS1 of girls and the more able?
- how is the school using targets to increase the rate of progress, attainment and attendance of pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language?
- how is the school's leadership working to develop pupils' involvement in the UK community and is its capacity to improve good?
- is the quality of care, guidance and support and the curriculum a real strength?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized school in Lincoln. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. An above average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including moderate and complex learning difficulties, and autistic, social and emotional difficulties. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a small proportion is from minority ethnic groups. One tenth of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. Children in Nursery and Reception classes follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, working in two classrooms with dedicated outside areas. The school has an Activemark and Healthy Schools Award.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bracebridge Infant and Nursery School gives its pupils a good quality of education. Pupils from all backgrounds and abilities are included effectively in school life. This is because the school's leadership welcomes all pupils genuinely. Pupils are happy in school because an outstanding level of care, guidance and support is given by staff. Pupils spoken to made many positive comments about the school and one said, 'It's the best school I've ever been to and I've been to four.'

An outstanding partnership is in place between the school and parents. One summed up many of the responses received when they wrote, 'I am very happy with the school, teachers and staff and would be more than happy to recommend it to anyone.' Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. This is a result of staff using the inside and outside learning areas successfully. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because teaching is good. Overall standards in Year 2 are average. Standards in applying mathematical skills are less well developed and very few more able pupils reach higher levels of attainment in writing. The school's leadership places a high priority on monitoring the pupils' progress and attainment carefully using a thorough tracking system. This ensures that any underachieving pupils are identified early. Teachers use practical activities well and so pupils learn through a rich variety of approaches. Assessment is often used successfully to guide teaching but occasionally pupils are not fully challenged because teachers do not consistently plan activities for more able pupils which will extend them fully and some pupils are not totally clear about how to reach the next level of skill.

Good leadership from the senior team, including the headteacher is driving improvements. Strong management has brought about effective improvements since the last inspection. For example, pupils have better opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills. This is because new resources have been purchased and a programme of assessment is in use, which ensures pupils progress well. As a result standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2. Governors work well with staff and challenge the school suitably. Self-evaluation is used successfully and so the school is in a good position to improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that most pupils learn to apply their basic skills in mathematics well and make better than expected progress every year.
- Make sure that those pupils who find learning more easy are given challenging work so that they reach the next level of skill in their writing.
- Ensure assessment is used more effectively so that all pupils understand fully the next steps to take in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well from their significantly below expected starting point to the end of Year 2. Consequently, standards are average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards dipped in 2008 but have been average in most recent years. Boys and girls make progress at a similar rate. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and so they achieve effectively and make good progress. More able pupils progress suitably considering their starting points because of the sound quality of support from staff. In the present Year 2 an expected proportion of pupils is working at above average levels of attainment, except in writing and mathematical investigations. This is because a few pupils do not always make better than expected progress each year.

The school's leadership places a high priority on enhancing pupils' personal development. As a result pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' contribution to the community is effective. The school council successfully assisted pupils to select new playground equipment. They really enjoy playing with the fabric parachute at break times because staff support their social development well. Pupils' behaviour is good because staff guide them calmly but firmly. They form effective relationships with adults because staff give them positive feedback about their behaviour and work. They are encouraged effectively to try new activities, which makes them feel positive about themselves. They are not always clear about the next steps they will take in their learning on a day to day basis. Pupils learn effectively about people in other countries who are less fortunate than they are. During a 'Multi-Cultural Week' pupils found out about how some people live in Africa, making beautiful models of their homes and jewellery. Pupils have really positive attitudes to learning, concentrate efficiently and the vast majority attend regularly. Pupils' grasp of basic skills and their effective personal qualities equip them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well. They are knowledgeable about foods from England and other countries which are good for them and those which are less valuable. All pupils spoken to said they usually eat at least two pieces of fruit or vegetables a day. Breakfast club is attended by a significant number of pupils and so they get a healthy breakfast before they start school. Many take part in physical exercise activities in and outside school. For example, a considerable proportion of pupils take part in the 'Fit Kids Club' which develops their fitness levels methodically. Pupils understand well how to keep themselves safe, for instance, when there is an

emergency in school, due to thoughtful tuition from staff. Pupils keep themselves safe when out walking because the school successfully encourages them to develop their awareness of road safety.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching is the key reason why pupils make effective progress in all aspects of their learning. Teachers work thoughtfully to make their lessons fun. Strong features of teaching include the successful use of practical teaching methods to ensure that pupils think deeply about their learning. In one good lesson seen, the Year 1 pupils were encouraged to use their imagination thoughtfully when they studied pictures of fantasy worlds because questions such as 'What do you think this object is?' were used well. Information and communication technology is used successfully to extend these pupils learning and so Year 2 pupils use their history and speaking skills creatively. An example was a wonderful film about life in a medieval castle that they made. Assessment effectively informs lesson planning. Although, lesson planning is detailed, in practice teachers do not always challenge pupils fully. For example, occasionally, staff are not clear about how to challenge pupils who find learning more easy especially in mathematics. This is because planning does not consistently record extension activities which would increase pupils' level of skill. The ends of the sessions are not always used well to evaluate what each pupil has learned. So occasionally, they do not discuss their personal targets in lessons or the next steps that they could take to improve their learning further.

A good curriculum places a highly effective emphasis on daily literacy and numeracy sessions. Regular science sessions develop pupils' understanding efficiently through investigative activities. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are promoted effectively through weekly teaching sessions and other opportunities to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

use their skills in many areas of learning. Provision for the gifted and talented is improving suitably. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all the exciting projects planned for them. They talk about art and design projects they have enjoyed doing such as making puppets where they successfully developed their creative skills. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is supported well through class and group discussion sessions. Pupils celebrate festivals such as Easter, learning about the Christian beliefs linked to this time of year because religious education topics are incorporated effectively into school planning. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements successfully. Topics prepare pupils well for life in our multicultural society. Special days where pupils immerse themselves in topics make learning really memorable. For example, Year 2 pupils recently took part in many medieval activities such as creating a banquet in a castle, having made some of food dishes they ate.

'Staff are very kind and they always look after you,' was one pupil's comment. The inspector agrees that pupils and parents receive an extremely high level of care from staff and this is a significant strength of the school. All pupils spoken to said they felt safe in school because staff are readily accessible. From the moment they enter the Nursery class, pupils' pastoral needs are met exceptionally well. Parents are spoken to so that staff quickly get to know their pupils' interests. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively and so they progress as well as their peers. Skilled teaching assistants very astutely support teachers in helping pupils who find learning more difficult and so all achieve well in their personal development. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are included effectively in school life and so they progress successfully. Transition to junior school is very well organised.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team is always looking for ways to make the school better. This is because the headteacher leads the school with very good ideas and drives improvement with enthusiasm and dedication. Subject leaders and staff have undertaken many valuable training courses which have allowed them to introduce new ways of structuring learning and skills development. For example, training on using images and pictures means pupils learn to use their creative and observational skills successfully. Pupils enjoy equal opportunities to learn. This is promoted well because each child is monitored closely individually. Senior leaders monitor pupils' attainment regularly and efficiently analyse their progress with teachers. Pupils' achievement is monitored on a termly basis and so targets for their attainment are reviewed regularly. Staff work well with other agencies to ensure that any barriers to learning are broken down.

The school works well to promote a sense of cohesion in the school and wider community. For example, at Christmas pupils sang successfully for older people from the local community. The school council assisted pupils to be involved effectively in choosing new playground equipment. Pupils also raise money for national charities and support global issues such as recycling and saving natural resources. Pupils took part in a national survey to calculate the populations of various types of British birds. The school has evaluated all aspects of community cohesion and is developing links with national groups who are working to make people more aware of how to sustain our world. A Parents' Centre on the school site means many parents are involved in training and support groups for many local people. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and all staff had child protection training in the last year. Governance is good and supports the school well. Governors are beginning to challenge the school's leadership. They gain a good level of knowledge of the school by coming in regularly and meeting with senior leaders. A strong team spirit unites the school's leadership and governors.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Standards are a little below average by the start of Year 1 but children have made good progress from their starting points which are significantly below expected levels of expertise in literacy and calculation. The children develop their basic skills effectively because staff use practical teaching methods well. Many activities are available to children to develop their writing skills and so they regularly opt to write during sessions where they choose what to do. For example, some children made letters and cards carefully and addressed the envelopes which they put them in. Children learn to use language to express their own thinking because the staff are skilful in asking searching questions. Children learn successfully to recognise and say letter sounds because a highly structured approach to teaching is in use. Staff assessments regularly highlight what children can do but they do not always record effectively the next steps they could take to improve. The starting point of each child is assessed carefully and individual achievement is beginning to be tracked rigorously.

Children's personal development is effective and their behaviour is good because all adults ensure that the welfare of each individual is supported well. For instance, three members of staff have completed training in first aid for children specifically in their early years. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and can easily extend their learning by collecting extra pieces of equipment due to the thoughtful way that resources are organised and staff expectations are made clear. Children happily share equipment and work cooperatively. Snack time is used carefully and so children learn to wait for their turn and say 'please' and 'thank you' when they choose their snack from a plate. The leadership of this stage of education is good. Effective management has improved the use of the outside area but there is no canopy outside and so pupils can not easily extend their learning with some protection from inclement weather.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An outstanding partnership is in place between parents and carers and the school. The majority of parents who returned a questionnaire were very positive about the school and their child's enjoyment of school life.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bracebridge Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 48 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 104 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	3	0	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



18 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bracebridge Infant and Nursery School, Lincoln, LN5 8QG

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a happy and friendly school. Positive things about your school include:

- you make good progress in your work
- you concentrate and behave well in school
- you really enjoy all the things you do at school
- your headteacher and senior teachers have very good ideas about ways to improve the school
- teaching is good and the staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- an excellent partnership is in place between the school and your parents
- staff care for you very well and listen to you thoughtfully.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important matters are to:

- ensure that you progress well every year by ensuring that you learn to apply your basic skills in mathematics
- make sure that those of you who find learning more easy are given challenging work that will help you to reach the next level of skill in your writing
- ensure assessment is used more effectively so that all of you understand the next steps you could take in your learning.

Continue to listen carefully to staff comments, come to school everyday and enjoy all the wonderful things you are learning at Bracebridge Infant and Nursery School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins
Lead inspector

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