

Bridlewood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134134
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	328838
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	227
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jayne Keen
Headteacher	Jo Garton
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chartwell Road Swindon SN25 2EX
Telephone number	01793 706830
Fax number	01793 705643

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Bridlewood Primary School is situated to the north-west of Swindon. While most pupils are from a White British background, there are small numbers of pupils from a wide range of other ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The headteacher joined the school in September 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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It has made some significant strides forward during the last year, and has a number of good features. The new headteacher's dynamic leadership inspires others to follow and gives leaders and managers at all levels the confidence to take the initiative themselves. This energy has resulted in everyone raising their game, with a sharp focus on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. While current standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement satisfactory, progress is accelerating and, for some pupils, it is good.

Pupils identify with the school and are proud members of it. This strong sense of belonging is a strength of the school. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and characterised by mutual respect. Individual pupils are sensitively nurtured. Good attention is given to ensuring vulnerable pupils and those at risk are well looked after. Pupils' good personal development is the consequence of the school's close attention to their care, guidance and support. The school's aim of securing the best both 'for and from' pupils is working well in practice.

The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school. As one parent typically commented to inspectors, 'Bridlewood is excellent at making every day different; learning appears fun and the teachers are positive. I am very happy.' A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the school's response to parental suggestions and complaints, and communication with parents. These concerns were investigated, but are not borne out by inspection evidence. The school is working hard to improve communication and, in this respect, the school's website is proving both popular and useful to a growing number of parents and pupils.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Thereafter, progress is satisfactory, although both standards and the rate of progress are improving as the school raises expectations. However, more-able pupils in both mathematics and writing do not always fulfil their potential. In addition, although writing is increasingly being taught successfully across the curriculum, pupils do not always confidently apply skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across all subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although much is good. Classrooms are attractive environments and teaching is characterised by good relationships and classroom management. Some teaching fails to offer enough challenge, particularly when feedback on how well pupils are doing is not used to plan work that builds on what they already know and can do.

At the heart of the school's work is its inclusive approach to the care of all pupils. Staff know pupils well and ensure they feel safe. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to work. Their behaviour is good. Academic assessment has improved considerably and, as a result, the school has a thorough analysis of pupils' progress. It uses this information effectively to plan support and intervention programmes for those at risk of underachievement. Leadership and management are good overall. Self-evaluation is realistic and provides a good framework for school improvement. Given the school's recent track record, it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved recently because of the good leadership by the Foundation Stage coordinator. When children enter the Reception class, their attainment is in line with age-related expectations, although skills in writing are lower. They make good progress overall, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creativity and imagination and physical development, where attainment of the current cohort is above expectations. Children are friendly and respond appropriately to questions and requests. They get on well with one another and work collaboratively as a team. They demonstrate independence in their self-chosen activities and persist at tasks. Children enjoy the activities on offer in both the indoor and the outdoor areas. Adults work closely together as a team, providing first-hand practical activities, which allow children to explore the world around them. They are also sensitive to the children's needs and support children's personal development in many ways. There is close adult support during more formal work, but there is less help available for activities that children choose for themselves. Assessment procedures are established but are not always used rigorously enough to direct future planning. Staff work closely with external agencies to support children's education. They also work very well with parents, and provide a good basis for the children on transfer to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, ensuring particularly that more-able pupils fulfil their potential, especially in mathematics and writing.
- Make sharper use of assessment to plan work that is more precisely matched to individual pupils' prior attainment and needs.
- Develop pupils' skills and confidence in using and applying language, number and ICT skills in all subjects across the curriculum.

A small proportion of the 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

A sharp focus on raising standards has resulted in improving performance during the course of this year. While achievement remains satisfactory, it is accelerating so that, for some pupils, it is good. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average at the end of Year 2. A decline in performance in recent years has been halted, and pupils are making satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2. However, fewer pupils than expected achieve the higher Level 3. This mirrors the picture at the end of Year 6. Here, standards are also broadly average and achievement is satisfactory, but some of the more-able pupils miss out on reaching the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Writing and mathematics are relatively weaker and a barrier to more rapid progress in a number of other subjects. The ability of pupils to apply basic skills across all subjects is underdeveloped. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are thoughtful and respectful in assemblies, have a good understanding of right and wrong, and of their responsibilities to others less fortunate. Pupils develop a good understanding of their own culture and that of others around them. Attitudes to learning are good, although while most pupils are polite and kind, on occasions, a small number of pupils are less sensitive to others. Pupils enjoy school and take part enthusiastically in all it has to offer. The school's website offers pupils good opportunities to express their views about school activities in the 'Guest Book', where evidence of enjoyment is not hard to find. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and this contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils feel safe and valued and are confident in asking for help when they need it. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and participate enthusiastically in physical activities and games. They especially enjoyed eating potatoes for lunch, which they had grown themselves in the school garden! Pupils contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community, participating responsibly as class monitors or school councillors. Pupils made confident speeches during the election for Fete President, giving all pupils a good insight into democratic processes. Pupils are rightly proud of their contribution in improving the school's environment, such as the quiet garden for pupils to sit and relax in. The 'buddy system' operated by Year 6 pupils provides valuable support for the reception children and helps to create a family atmosphere. Pupils are developing satisfactory workplace skills for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory as a whole, although much of the teaching is good. Although teaching is improving, it is not yet having a full impact on pupils' learning and progress. At its best, teaching is exciting and motivating. Classrooms are welcoming learning places, in which displays and working walls ensure pupils are encouraged to work hard. Teachers' classroom management is good and they skilfully organise activities and resources. The interactive whiteboard is particularly well used and teachers draw on interesting resources, such as videos, to inspire learning. They also manage the behaviour of a small number of challenging pupils very well, ensuring these pupils are included and concentrating well. Some teaching, however, fails to ensure all pupils, and particularly the more able, are sufficiently challenged. The use of individual learning target cards has made a significant difference to pupils' knowledge of how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. Teachers are using assessment with increasing confidence to set work which builds on pupils' prior attainment, but this could be better still. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is effective, and teaching assistants provide well-targeted support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school because of all the interesting things they get to do. The curriculum has many good features, but is satisfactory overall because it does not yet build consistently on pupils' prior attainment ensuring that all pupils do well. While appropriate time is given to

the development of literacy and numeracy skills, the school has rightly prioritised the development of a more exciting, motivating and relevant curriculum, in which subjects are integrated and basic skills are used and applied in different subjects. This work has started, though, and there are good examples of writing in other subjects, particularly in some of the curriculum projects designed through 'The Quest'. The school's community gardening initiative – 'The Wheelbarrow Project' – offers exciting opportunities for pupils to work with local people and share their gardening skills. Pupils have good opportunities to deepen and enrich their learning through visits, visitors and clubs. Regular school productions, like *Oliver*, which was in rehearsal at the time of the inspection, provide superb opportunities for pupils to develop confidence, teamwork and creativity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and know that their school is a caring community. Staff listen to pupils and help them to move forward. Child protection procedures are robust and regular health and safety checks are conducted, so the school is a very safe place. The school takes good care to protect their pupils and to support their learning. As a result, all pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those very few with English as an additional language, are well integrated. There are close links with a range of agencies ensuring the appropriate support for the pupils. The school works well with parents and keeps them regularly informed. Carefully planned procedures help children settle when they start school and prepare Year 6 pupils for secondary education. Marking is regular and provides useful feedback to show pupils how to improve their work. Good systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress are in place, but performance data and feedback are not yet used as sharply as they should be to ensure all pupils fulfil their potential and raise achievement even further. Nevertheless, pupils know their targets and what they are expected to learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership by the headteacher has ensured that her vision and values are shared widely. In this, she is well supported by her deputy and leaders and managers at all levels. Self-evaluation is good, and the use of curriculum teams to monitor provision has created a sense of shared endeavour and teamwork. Staff have welcomed the headteacher's ideas and jumped at the opportunity to contribute. The school improvement plan sets out a sensible framework for development, and effective monitoring by governors ensures they are already making a valuable contribution to both strategic planning and monitoring. The use of challenging targets is driving up standards and raising expectations. The impact of strategies and initiatives taken to improve standards has already been positive and ensured some swift improvements. For example, the use of target cards in literacy and numeracy to keep pupils on track has already ensured more pupils are making good progress. The school is keen to tackle remaining areas in need of development. Its contribution to community cohesion is good in many respects, and links with the new and emerging local community of Bridlewood have already developed well. The school has sensible plans to extend this work nationally and internationally. The planned 'community and diversity' week is designed to take an important first step in this direction.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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?	2

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

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

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridlewood Primary School, Swindon SN25 2EX

- Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed our visit. Thank you also for being so friendly and for helping us during the inspection. My colleague and I especially enjoyed the fruit some of you brought us! We agree with a lot of what you told us and are not surprised that you enjoy coming to school so much. Bridlewood is providing you with a satisfactory education, and it is getting better all the time. As a result, there are lots of good things about it.
- You enjoy coming to school and try hard to do your best in lessons.
- Most of you behave very well. We found you thoughtful and polite.
- Everybody at school gets on well together.
- While some of you are making good progress, progress for most is satisfactory.
- Teachers manage your learning well and your classrooms are stimulating places to be.
- The school takes considerable care to ensure you feel safe and well looked after.
- All the staff and governors are working successfully to make your school even better.

We have asked your school to do the following in order to make things even better.

- Make sure that all of you make better progress, and particularly those of you capable of the highest standards in maths and writing.
- Ensure that teachers plan work for you in lessons which takes account of how much you already know and is planned to suit your individual needs.
- Help you learn how to use writing, number and computer skills in lots of different subjects.

You can certainly help the staff with these things. Good luck with the production of Oliver! I wish I could have stayed to see more! Thank you once again for your help during our visit and good luck with your work in the future.

Yours faithfully

Tony Shield

Lead inspector