

Bromley Hills Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103819
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336168
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Dobbins

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 of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Morgan
Headteacher	Jon Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 13 lessons in whole or in part, observed all the 12 teachers, held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils and spoke with the school improvement partner. Inspectors looked at data the school has on pupils' progress and analysed documents and policies. They scrutinised 103 parental questionnaires and spoke with 23 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of senior leaders in improving the school, especially in raising pupils' achievement
- whether the attainment and progress of this year's leavers continues the trend of improvement seen last year
- how good a start children get in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Bromley Hills is a larger than average sized school. Almost all of the pupils are White British. It is co-located on the same campus with a special school and a secondary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is about average. Over the last five years, there have been six different headteachers. The current headteacher took up the post in April 2009 and the deputy headteacher joined the school in November 2009.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Bromley Hills is a satisfactory and improving school. Senior leaders have made a good start, in the relatively short time they have been at school, in embedding procedures and raising expectations for teaching and learning. They have gained the good support of staff and governors. Emerging evidence shows that pupils are doing better in their learning. One parent said that, 'Before the new headteacher arrived, I would have given the school four out of ten, now I am giving it eight out of ten.'

Achievement is satisfactory. Typically, children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment below that expected nationally for their age in each of the areas of early learning. They settle well, and quickly develop good relationships with the adults. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory progress in the other areas of learning. Their attainment is still below expectations when they enter Year 1, and the links between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are not strong enough. In Years 1 to 6, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, pupils make satisfactory progress, although current data points to an upward trend in progress. In English, pupils who left Year 6 last year and those who are leaving this year have done better than those who left in previous years. Given that these pupils entered Year 1 with levels in English below those expected for their age, and leave at better than expected levels, they have made good progress over their time at school. Progress in mathematics and science is also improving, but at a slower rate. This year's leavers attain at about the levels expected of them in mathematics and science and have made satisfactory progress over their time at school. The improvement in progress is set to continue as the concerted efforts of senior leaders, teachers and their assistants reap due reward. School records show that pupils currently in each year are on average, making better progress than was the case for those in the same classes last year, with improvement being greatest in English for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The catch-up strategies introduced by senior leaders to raise the low attainment in mathematics of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are working, but in all year groups throughout the school, mathematics is showing the slowest rate of improvement. Pupils are proud of their school. They say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They attend regularly and have good relationships with their teachers and assistants. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They fully understand their role as learners and this contributes to how well they are doing because, routinely, in lessons they work hard to do their best. They know what is right and wrong, and are able make difficult choices, including those to do with staying safe and keeping healthy.

Evidence of improvement can be seen in other areas of the school besides the increase in progress. This shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. For

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example, senior leaders have refined the self-evaluation procedures so that they gain better knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, these procedures are still not rigorous or comprehensive enough to provide full information on how well the school is doing in all areas of its work. For example, it has identified that marking is not contributing enough to raising progress because it does not guide pupils well enough to the next steps in their learning. In addition, while the new system for recording and tracking pupils' progress is potentially good, not all teachers are using assessment information well enough in planning lessons that make sure learning is always relevant to each pupil, or in judging how well pupils are doing against their targets for learning in subjects.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To continue the trend of improving progress, especially in mathematics, senior leaders should operate a rigorous programme to monitor and evaluate:
 - the use of assessment information in planning lessons to ensure that they match the learning needs of all pupils
 - marking to make sure it provides guidance on the next steps in learning
 - pupils' progress toward their individual learning targets.
- Strengthen the links between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 to ensure a smooth transition in children's learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In the good lessons, all pupils, irrespective of their learning needs or capabilities, make equally good progress against their targets for learning. These lessons are purposeful and enjoyable events in which pupils work hard to do their best. For example, in a mathematics lesson that introduced pupils to the concept of division, the objectives for the lesson were made clear to pupils and they knew what they had to achieve to show that they had met the objectives. The teacher introduced the notion of 'sharing' using real cherries by dividing equally into two, three and four. At regular intervals throughout the lesson, the learning objectives were reviewed and when the class split into groups the tasks for each group related well to pupils' learning needs. The lesson hurried along and all pupils gained a good understanding of the concept of division in a stimulating and fun way. In the satisfactory lessons, some pupils do better than others. This is because too often planning does not take enough account of what pupils know and can do and the learning objectives are not precise enough in guiding pupils in their learning. When this is the case, pupils rehearse what they already know or attempt tasks that are too hard for them.

The school is a cohesive community. Pupils are proud of the roles they play in its

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day-to-day running, from membership of the emerging school council, as prefects, litter pickers and playground monitors. The links with the local community are currently limited, but do include enjoyable occasions, for example, when pupils visit old people's homes to sing carols at Christmas time and to give them gifts of food at Harvest time. An awareness of the wider world is gained through the study of French and German and by choosing to support local, national and international charities, including the British Legion Poppy Appeal and Shoebox. Pupils understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and show this by their high level of participation in the many after-school sports clubs and through their good choices about what to eat. The residential visits for the older pupils are much enjoyed. For those in Year 6 in particular, these experiences are a valuable opportunity to gain the self-confidence and self-assurance they require as young people who expect to be successful at the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Expectations for teaching and learning are rising. Planning for lessons now follows a

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

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consistent approach over all classes, which includes using clearly stated objectives to guide learning. This new development is taking time to fully bed in. The good lessons are characterised by precisely stated objectives for learning and the linked success criteria. Pupils are routinely reminded of the objectives, and their progress toward achieving them is regularly checked by teachers' good questioning, especially during plenary activities. This is not the case in all the lessons. In too many, new learning is not always built securely on prior attainment and this limits overall progress. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to plan tasks that meet the needs of each pupil. As a consequence, tasks are sometimes too easy or too hard for pupils. Classrooms are bright and spacious and are good places to teach and to learn. Resources, especially interactive whiteboards, are used well.

English, mathematics and science are taught as discrete subjects, and this allows teachers to make precise judgements on the levels pupils are attaining. Most of the other subjects are taught as part of a topic or theme in the developing creative curriculum. Pupils are enjoying choosing topics that make learning interesting for them. However, the approach to assessing how well pupils are doing in each of these foundation subjects is not yet good enough to accurately recognise the levels they are attaining or the progress they are making. Curriculum planning in foundation subjects is, therefore, not as robust as that in the core subjects. A strength of the curriculum is the way additional opportunities enrich and extend pupils' learning experiences. These include taking part in a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, and for the older pupils taking some of their science, German and physical education lessons in the nearby secondary school.

The good support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensures that their additional needs are well met for them to make similar progress to their peers. Strong partnerships with a range of outside agencies provide valuable specialist help and support for pupils and their families. Pupils' good feelings of safety reflect the effectiveness in the quality of care at all levels. Concerted action to improve attendance, including relentless following up through telephone conversations with parents and carers, has significantly reduced the level of persistent absence. Recent improvements have ensured that transition arrangements to the next school are good. The 'Penguin Club' provides well for pupils, both before and after school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3 3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>2</p>

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How effective are leadership and management?

The new team of senior leaders has gained the full support of most staff for the changes they have introduced, to ensure their ambitious strategies to have all pupils gain equal access to all the school offers are being fully met. Governors know the school well and are aware of the negative impact the high number of headteachers has had on pupil achievement over recent years. The governing body is led well and collectively its members have the skills, knowledge and determination to challenge leaders in their drive for improvement. Governors are pleased with the good start the senior leaders have made in raising achievement. Nevertheless, the journey of improvement is at its beginning and, because of this, the capacity of leaders for sustaining improvement is satisfactory.

Parents and carers see Bromley Hills as an improving school. One wrote, 'The school has been re-vitalised. There is always room for improvement and finally Bromley Hills is working toward achieving an excellent standard of education.' They appreciate the closer links that are being developed between them and the school. They like the increased flow of information they are receiving from the school, for example, through the new format for reports, the open evenings and the website. They especially like the workshops that give help and advice on how they can support their child's learning at home. Safeguarding procedures are thorough. Due regard has been paid to community cohesion and the school is working toward developing links with other schools locally, nationally and internationally. The partnerships with the two other schools that share the campus provide learning experiences that benefit pupils' learning and development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Over their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and, for some, good progress in aspects of their personal development. Attainment by the time children reach Year 1 remains slightly below that expected for their age. In the Nursery, children have many opportunities of choosing activities and they talk excitedly about their experiences. In Reception, they have fewer opportunities. Nevertheless, they enjoy the range of activities on offer to explore and extend their skills and knowledge, especially when they are in the new outdoor area. In both the Nursery and Reception, children demonstrate that they are gaining a good understanding of how to learn. They behave well as they play and learn together, developing an understanding of how to be safe and healthy. In Reception, there is currently not enough focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills in preparation for work at Year 1. This is compounded by a system for recording progress that is not sufficiently effective. As a consequence, the links between Reception and Year 1 are not strong enough to ensure a seamless transition in learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who spoke with inspectors or who responded to the questionnaire say they like the school very much. Their children enjoy coming to school. They are appreciative of the teaching and of the changes that senior leaders are introducing. Some parents and carers would like more information on how well their children are doing. The school recognises this and senior leaders are working on new ways of providing information to parents and carers, including through the new website and by developing more comprehensive reports. A few parents and carers are concerned about the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judge that procedures for improving behaviour work well and that pupils' good behaviour contributes on a daily basis to the school being a calm and well-ordered place.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bromley Hills Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 276 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	45	52	50	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	44	54	52	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	22	68	66	12	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	28	64	62	8	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	29	28	69	67	2	2	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	27	66	64	7	7	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	24	75	73	1	1	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	27	68	66	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	25	66	64	6	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	19	69	67	8	8	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	19	67	65	7	7	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	35	34	62	60	2	2	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	42	54	52	4	4	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bromley Hills Primary School, Kingswinford, DY6 8LW

It was lovely for me and my colleagues to meet and spend time with you when we visited your school. Thank you for making us so welcome. Bromley Hills is a satisfactory school, but has some important aspects that are improving. These are some of the things we especially liked:

- the good progress you are making in English
- your good behaviour and the way you work hard in your lessons
- that you feel proud to be a member of the school and show this by acting as prefects, playground monitors, litter pickers and as members of the school council
- that you feel safe and comfortable at school and are well cared for
- that you know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and that most of you make healthy choices a lot of the time
- the way in which your headteacher and the other senior leaders are working hard to make your school a better place for learning.

There are a few things we have asked your headteacher and other leaders to do to make your school even better for you. We would like them to look more closely at how your teachers plan lessons. We want them to make sure that the work you have to do in lessons is always right for each one of you, not too hard and not too easy. We want your teachers to have a better idea of how well you are doing against your learning targets and to make sure marking tells you what to do to get to the next stage of your learning. Finally, we have asked for the links between the Reception Year and Year 1 to be closer so that children join Year 1 ready for their work there.

These improvements should help you to reach higher standards in your learning. Of course, you can help too, by always behaving as well as you can and by continuing to work hard all the time.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins

Lead Inspector

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