

Bransty Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112167
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337857
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	David Byrne

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 of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Jackson
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Fearon
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed and meetings held with governors, staff and pupils. The inspectors evaluated the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the improvement plan, pupils' work and the school's records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection analysed 49 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the implications of lower test results in 2009 for pupils' progress and achievement
- the effectiveness of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the contribution of the curriculum to pupils' personal and academic progress and to promoting community cohesion
- the involvement of all staff to the management of the school.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school, which is strategically resourced within the county for deaf/hearing impaired children. All pupils are of White British ethnic backgrounds. The percentage eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. An above average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities and the number with statements of special educational need is well above average. The headteacher was previously the school's deputy for a year before her appointment, and took up the promoted post in September 2009. The deputy headteacher was appointed at the same time.

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

2

Main findings

Bransty provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is a much valued part of the community held in high regard by parents and pupils. After a period when achievement and progress dipped, the school is improving rapidly. This is the result of better teaching and learning, improved use of assessment and the impact of a visionary senior leadership team. Moreover, the positive atmosphere in school stems from the raised aspirations and morale of both staff and pupils. The school's good levels of care contribute to the pupils feeling safe. On leaving the school, pupils have good attitudes, form good relationships and have empathy with others different from themselves. They generally have a good awareness of how to live safe and healthy lives.

Pupils learning and progress is satisfactory. Recently, improved teaching has quickened the pace of learning to good in many lessons. However, it is too soon to see the results of the good teaching in pupils' attainment, which could be higher still in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Those with hearing impairment make outstanding progress. The curriculum is in a state of transition. The school is moving towards a curriculum that places a greater emphasis on practical work and the application of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils welcome the introduction of these new approaches, which are only, as yet, partly in place. The success of the new methods were witnessed when Year 6 pupils learnt about chemical changes as part of making fake wounds connected with a film topic!

Assessment is satisfactory. It is increasingly used to target support to those falling behind but pupils' targets are not refined enough to give personalised guidance to each pupil.

The upturn in the school after a period of decline is due to the strong but caring leadership of a new senior leadership team. A very clear vision has been injected and all staff have accepted a sense of urgency for change. The buildings have been totally remodelled which adds to the quality of education for all, and especially for the hearing impaired. However, the outside space for learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not developed well enough for children to choose their own play activities. The school is well managed by the senior staff and administrator, but the management role of middle leaders is underdeveloped. Despite this, the school's self-evaluation is accurate. Recent strategies to improve the school are proving to be very effective. Given the current quality of senior leadership, improved teaching and quickening progress in lessons, the school demonstrates a good capacity to sustain improvements in future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment and improve achievement further by:
 - refining assessment so that pupils are given better information about how they need to improve their work
 - extending opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills across the curriculum
 - enabling all staff, in particular middle leaders, to contribute to the school's management and school self-evaluation to further strengthen provision across the school.
- Improve aspects of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - establishing a clear policy and action plan to unite the Nursery and Reception classes
 - seeking ways of providing suitable accommodation for learning outdoors.
- 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**

Pupils enjoy lessons and thrive on a recent increase in opportunities for them to participate in their own learning. They are rapidly developing the confidence to make decisions and find things out for themselves. In a lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils responded with great enjoyment and confidence when asked to discuss a series of pictures depicting the events of a poem that they were about to study. Pupils are taking pride in their work although some struggle with handwriting, an issue the school is looking at.

The current high levels of enjoyment amongst pupils are a reflection of recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum. Over the last three years, progress and achievement has been satisfactory and attainment has been broadly average but declining. In 2009 test results at Year 6 were below average. Swift actions by the new leadership team have stopped the decline. Progress in lessons is now good as a result of good teaching and learning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. They behave well and treat others with respect. Pupils benefit from a number of effective strategies to educate them about staying safe and healthy. As a result, they talk knowledgeably about the importance of exercise and a balanced diet. The pupils' voice is highly valued by staff and school councillors talk with pride about how they are helping to improve the school. Being playground helpers and helping to run the school's healthy tuck shop adds to their sense of taking responsibility for others. Close links with the Fairtrade organisation makes a significant difference to the pupils' understanding of how to take action to help others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils unselfishly raise funds for a wide variety of charities including for children in the UK and abroad for example in Africa. Most recently, they have set about raising funds for flood victims in their own county. Taking into

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account pupils' current progress in lessons and their good personal qualities, they are well prepared for 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	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils benefit from a dedicated teaching and support team who have raised their game considerably as a result of a more settled school and in response to higher expectations from senior leaders. Staff know that pupils can do better and have established a range of action plans to raise attainment. Effective and, in some respects, innovative initiatives have been implemented to give individually tailored support to pupils who find mathematics difficult and to help pupils who are falling behind in reading and writing. Lessons are generally well planned and assessment used to match pupils' work to their ability. Pupils are constantly encouraged to talk and share their thoughts with each other. Staff working with the hearing impaired pupils are excellent. They use good array techniques to include pupils in all that the school does including the skilled use of sign language.

An increased focus on assessment is increasing teacher's knowledge of the pupils'

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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academic performance. This is improving the way lessons are planned so that pupils are more suitably challenged and, where necessary, stretched. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own performance, but they are not yet as involved as they could be in monitoring their own progress. Academic targets tend to be too general and not directly linked to the pupils specific needs arising from the marking and evaluation of their work.

The curriculum is in the process of being overhauled to make it more fun and enable pupils to develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in all subjects. Some developments are still at an early stage and not yet refined enough to run across all subjects. Imaginative approaches to planning subjects are being trialled and with a very positive response from pupils and staff. Great success is occurring in encouraging pupils to write and read more often and in helping pupils who find mathematics difficult. Good links with other schools enhance aspects of learning for example, the school sports co-ordination. Pupils say they welcome the burgeoning range of extra-curricular opportunities now on offer to them.

Pupils are cared for well. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and dedicated to working together for the good of all pupils. The school actively welcomes links with parents and carers. They are increasingly responding to efforts of the school to help their children's learning at home.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by a skilled deputy, has created a new brand for the school within the term the, Bransty Bež' which underpins an ethos that values everyone and believes that everyone can succeed. This new approach is improving progress and lifting attainment. A truly open door policy welcomes parents in. They feel very much part of the school.

The inclusion of all, regardless of ability or special need is a strength of the school and reflects its good commitments to equality of opportunities for all. Performance management underpins staff development backed by a well organised school improvement plan. The priorities for improvement are constructed after carefully evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff have a clearly defined role but middle managers are not yet able to play a full part in school management. This limits the degree to which the good work undertaken by the senior leaders has, as yet, been embedded throughout the school.

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Governance is satisfactory. It is increasingly better informed about the indicators for the school, for example the assessment data and targets. Governors are beginning to visit the school regularly to get to know it better. All statutory requirements are met, including those related to safeguarding. There is a commitment to promoting community cohesion. Links with outside agencies such as the use of the school by a neighbourhood playgroup and the way school signposts parents and carers to help and support show its good contribution to cohesion within the community. The promotion of cohesion in the wider United Kingdom and global sense is developing satisfactorily with contacts being established to a school in Bradford.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children generally do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Nursery and Reception classes are in different parts of the building and do not have easy access to the outside space. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. It ensures children's welfare and safety. However, there is a lack of consistency between the Nursery and Reception classes, partly caused by the accommodation, in terms of planning, assessment and record keeping.

Children start Nursery with skills of development that are below typical for their age and leave in Reception having made up ground to get to average standards overall. The good progress and achievement is due to good teaching overall which matches the children's needs in each class. A caring environment welcomes children into Nursery. An experienced teacher provides, within a rather small space, a variety of well planned activities, which harnesses children's attentions. Good links with home through home

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visits coupled with tasks that children take home, for example, 'Passport to the Planets', give parents a good chance to get involved with their children's learning. In Reception, expectations are suitably high and despite some limitations presented by the accommodation, children make good progress overall. In both classes, the teaching assistants make a valuable contribution enabling children to receive focused adult support at times and taking advantage of carefully planned play situations.

Shortcomings in the provision for outdoor learning limit the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children cannot choose to go outside when they want: they rely on adults to take them at set times. Staff do their best to overcome this but work within the limitations of the accommodation.

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	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers views communicated to the inspection team in their questionnaires indicate that they are very supportive of the school. They are particularly happy about the overall quality of experience provided for their children, the quality of leadership within it and the quality of teaching. Some concerns were expressed about the level of communication from the school and also a small number expressed concern about the behaviour within it. The inspection agrees with many of the positive views and does not support the concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bransty 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 inspector received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bransty Primary School, Whitehaven, CA28 6EG

I promised that I would write to you to let you know the outcomes of your recent inspection. Firstly, thank you for sharing time with me in lessons, during lunchtime and also in a meeting. I have good memories of how friendly and polite you all are and how well you treat each other. You all seem to have a reasonable idea of how to stay fit and healthy, which are important things for your future happiness.

You rightly told me that you felt the school was getting better. It is in very good hands. Your headteacher is bringing in lots of positive changes to make lessons more enjoyable. You all seem to enjoy school and the lessons I visited were good fun with lots of interesting things to do. You benefit from good teaching, a curriculum that is getting better all the time and have very caring adults supporting you.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start but the accommodation is not good enough for good outdoor learning so I have asked the school to seek ways of improving this. Moreover, the Nursery and Reception classes should work more closely together despite being in different parts of the building.

Attainment by the end of Year 6 is improving but you can still do better in English and mathematics. Your work, however, is improving because you are now enjoying lessons because you are doing more practical things. There is, however, more to do in helping you practise your basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy in all subjects. I was pleased to see you are getting used to checking on how well you are doing, but I feel more can be done to help you know what to do to improve your work. I have asked the school to find ways of doing this. I am also asking teachers who take on middle leadership roles, to help your headteacher and deputy headteacher, to do more to help raise attainment.

As time goes on, you may find that some of your teachers spend more time talking with you to see what you are learning. If you work with them as well as you worked with me, your school will be even better in the future!

Yours sincerely,

Mr David Byrne

Lead Inspector

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