

Bell Lane Primary (J and I) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130965
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	341073
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graham Lyons
Headteacher	Mrs Louise Ward
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
School address	Bell Lane Ackworth Pontefract WF7 7JH
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons, observed 10 teachers, held meetings with staff, governors, and pupils and talked informally with parents and carers. The inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including policies, improvement plans, pupils' work and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. The inspectors also analysed 46 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress in writing
- pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly their understanding and appreciation of communities that are different from their own
- how well teaching challenges and meets the needs of boys and girls of different abilities, particularly the more able
- the impact of the changes in leadership and management since the last inspection
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the effect it has on children's attainment and progress.

Information about the school

Bell Lane is a little larger than many primary schools. It serves the local area in and around the large village of Ackworth, some four miles from the centre of Pontefract. Almost all pupils are White British and with very few exceptions speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The school has been reaccredited as an Investor in People. A breakfast club is available to pupils before the start of each school day. Since the last inspection the school has experienced changes in leadership and management with the deputy headteacher firstly becoming the acting headteacher and very recently the substantive headteacher.

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

Bell Lane provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Most pupils make steady gains in knowledge, understanding and skills and at the end of Year 6 their attainment is broadly average. The majority of pupils are happy at school and they are finding lessons increasingly more enjoyable as the recently introduced creative curriculum becomes established. Most pupils have good oral skills and read competently but their writing is often of a lower quality. This particularly applies to the boys, many of whom make frequent mistakes with punctuation and grammar and when speaking do not make use of the range of words they know. Although not always the case, in general, teaching and the curriculum do not stimulate pupils' interest in writing well enough.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but varies widely. At one end of the spectrum, lively, innovative teaching captures pupils' interest and moves their learning forward quickly. In contrast, there are the occasional lessons in which a lack of challenge and mundane content result in pupils making insufficient progress. While teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the start of all lessons, these sometimes lack clarity, making them difficult for pupils to understand and use when evaluating their own and others' work. The match of work to pupils' abilities varies. In some lessons it is good but at other times the work set, particularly for higher attainers, lacks sufficient challenge. Teachers mark pupils' work well and set them appropriate targets for improvement but many of the advantages are lost by pupils' lack of understanding of how to use their targets.

Pupils report they feel safe in school and they make satisfactory progress overall in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While pupils are involved in the local community and with other schools, they have too few opportunities to learn about and appreciate communities and cultures that are different from their own.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory but uneven, with staff absences and changes of leadership affecting the school's development. These are now in the past and the school has begun to move forward. Leaders, managers and governors have a realistic picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and make accurate judgements about its performance. Plans for development are realistic and focus on the school's most pressing needs. While work remains to be done to secure the improvements made and to involve all staff in the school's development, there is a growing confidence in what can and will be achieved. These factors combined give the school a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing throughout the school, particularly that of the boys, by:
 - providing more stimulus and increasing pupils' enthusiasm for writing across all subjects
 - helping pupils to eliminate basic mistakes quickly and encouraging them to make full use of their vocabulary.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - making sure lesson objectives are clear so that pupils can use them to evaluate their own work and that of others
 - ensuring that pupils understand their targets and can use them to help them improve their work
 - providing work that is closely matched to pupils' differing abilities, particularly the more able.
- Increase pupils' understanding and appreciation of cultures and communities that are different from their own.
- 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

The large majority of pupils enjoy school and readily apply themselves to the tasks the teachers set. Most behave well in lessons, particularly when the content stimulates their interest and tasks are varied and challenging. A minority are inclined to call out or talk in the background while the teacher is speaking and need regular reminders of what is expected. Pupils generally work well together, sharing ideas and discussing what they are doing sensibly but they have a tendency to lose concentration quite quickly when not fully challenged by the lesson's content. Older pupils in particular can be rather passive and have to be encouraged to get involved rather than taking the responsibility themselves.

From a starting point that is broadly average on entry to Year 1, pupils make steady progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6 standards are often similar to the national average and this represents satisfactory achievement. At this point most pupils have attained the expected level for their age across different subjects. However, a smaller proportion than could be expected go on to attain at an above average level, often because the challenge lessons provide for the more able pupils is not as high as it could to be. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall but varies between individuals; some of these pupils make good progress towards their personal targets. Most pupils work and play happily together and show respect for each other's views and opinions. Some find the unsociable behaviour a minority of pupils occasionally exhibit

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unsettling but feel that most staff deal effectively with any problems this causes. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to live a healthy life, helped by school initiatives such as the 'Grow it, cook it, eat it' project and regular opportunities for physical exercise. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community, which they extend further by regularly raising money for a variety of charities. Average attendance and the development of a reasonable range of basic skills provides a satisfactory platform for future learning and beyond. When encouraged to do so they can be quite reflective but older pupils do not always think about the 'hows' and 'whys' as often as they might. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture is satisfactory, but many show little understanding of communities that are different from their own but are an integral part of modern British society.

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?

Most teachers question effectively, helping pupils to develop competence in speaking and listening. While the majority of lessons move along at a reasonable pace, on occasions time is lost by teachers giving explanations that are too long. Lessons are

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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planned in sufficient detail and build on what pupils have experienced previously. On occasions, the link between the lesson objective and the work pupils are given to do is rather tenuous and tasks do not provide the right amount of challenge. Teachers' marking is often detailed and informative, giving pupils clear advice on what they need to do to improve. However, the links between this and the targets pupils are set are not secure enough and pupils often continue to make the same mistakes, particularly in their writing. The work of teaching assistants is satisfactory but again variable in quality. Some work closely with class teachers to provide well-focused support for pupils but others have a tendency to do too much for the pupils or to sit passively alongside them. Developments this year have moved the curriculum from a subject-based programme towards one that links subjects together creatively and places far more emphasis on development of skills. Pupils' response to this change has been positive, particularly where teachers have taken the new approach fully on board. However, improvement is not yet complete and the curriculum currently provides satisfactory support for pupils' learning. The least effective element relates to writing. While there are some notable examples of good practice, in general, opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects are not utilised well enough. The school's involvement in the Open Futures programme is providing pupils with valuable experiences of growing healthy foods, helping them acquire a deeper understanding of where the food they eat comes from. Curriculum enrichment is satisfactory and pupils enjoy an acceptable range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.

The school pays due attention to pupils' welfare and has satisfactory systems for supporting their progress and development. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is generally well organised and effective. Very occasionally, the in-class support these pupils receive from designated staff is not as well focused as it might be. An appropriate range of strategies is used to support pupils who are showing signs of falling behind with their work and this helps them to keep up with their peers. The school keeps a very careful watch over pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and supports them well. As a result, they attend school regularly and often make good progress in their all-round development. Arrangements for ensuring that pupils attend regularly and transfer smoothly from one stage of their education to the next are satisfactory. The daily breakfast club provides an enjoyable start to the day for those who attend.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

Since taking up the post the headteacher, with the aid of the assistant headteachers, has increased staff's involvement in decision making, improved the efficiency of the school's management systems and refined procedures for tracking pupils' progress. As a result, the school is now in a position to accelerate its pace of development. However, inconsistencies in provision and practice which adversely affect pupils' achievement have not been fully eliminated. Consequently, the equality of opportunity the school provides for pupils and the steps taken to eliminate discrimination are currently satisfactory. Governors are playing an increasingly effective role in guiding and challenging the school but are a little too reliant on information for outside sources for their view of how well it is performing.

Communication with parents and carers is generally satisfactory but they are not provided with enough regular information about their children's progress. In contrast, the school liaises well with parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and shares targets productively with them.

The school has forged several useful partnerships which make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning and those in support of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable work particularly well. Pupils are kept safe and secure in school but some of the relevant policies and procedures are in need of review to bring them fully up to date. While the school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion overall, links with communities outside of the village are limited, although Year 4 pupils are in regular contact with a school in Australia and links with a school in India are being established.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are typical of the age group. They make satisfactory progress and with few exceptions reach the targets for their age by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. While the proportion of children who exceed expectations is relatively small and not consistent across all areas of learning, it is rising as the recent improvements in Nursery and Reception take effect. However, early writing is not promoted as well as other areas of learning and children's attainment in this aspect of language development area is lower than in others. The quality of teaching children receive varies between satisfactory and good. There are examples of very effective practice in which the teacher skilfully utilises opportunities that arise while children are playing to extend their literacy and numeracy skills, encourage their creative thinking and develop their ability to work cooperatively. All staff have good relationships with children, care for them well and provide an environment which children enjoy and in which they are happy. They interact continually with the children but there are times when activities are a little too directed or opportunities for staff to intervene to extend children's understanding with more challenging questions and suggestions are missed. Children readily share what they are doing and explain it to others but show less confidence when asked to respond to 'I wonder what?' statements or answer 'why?' questions. Assessment procedures are thorough and provide a clear picture of the progress children are making which is shared with parents and carers. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Steady development is taking place although action planning is currently not sharp enough to accelerate the pace of improvement.

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 returned the questionnaire are pleased that their children enjoy school and are happy with the experiences staff provide for them. A number of the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or added notes to their questionnaires commented on the improvements in the school they had noticed of late, which is

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something inspectors also recognised. Quite a few parents and carers have concerns about the quality and frequency of information they receive from the school, particularly about their children's progress. Inspectors agree that parents and carers should be kept better informed and this is recognised by the school as an area in which improvement is needed. A significant minority of parents and carers feel that their children are not learning as much as they could. While pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, inspectors believe there is scope for improvement, particularly for the more able pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bell Lane Primary (J and I) 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	48	22	48	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	57	18	39	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	13	29	63	8	17	3	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	33	20	43	9	20	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	14	30	19	41	9	20	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	22	25	54	9	20	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	26	32	70	2	4	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)	5	11	27	59	8	17	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	22	27	59	8	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	15	26	57	8	17	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	13	21	46	7	15	3	7
The school is led and managed effectively	11	24	23	50	7	15	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	33	22	48	7	15	1	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bell Lane Primary (J and I) School, Pontefract, WF7 7JH

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

Bell Lane is a satisfactory and improving school. Most of you make steady progress in your learning and by the end of Year 6 attainment is generally around the level we would expect for your age. However, while many of you speak and read quite well your writing is often not as good. This is particularly true of boys' writing which often has simple errors and does not flow as well as it might. We have discussed this with your teachers and identified what needs to improve. You need to play your part by referring regularly to the targets you have been set and making sure that you are not repeating the same mistakes. Many of you know a good range of words but do not always use them well enough when writing in different subjects. To help you get the most from lessons we have asked teachers to ensure that you always have a clear grasp of the lesson's objectives and can use them to assess how well you have done. The work teachers set needs to be at just the right level so that it challenges you to do your best all of the time. You can help by getting involved as much as possible in the lessons and not always waiting for the teacher to make things happen.

Many of you told us that you feel happy and safe at school. This was good to hear and I know staff will be pleased. Most pupils behave well both in and out of lessons but a few individuals are not as considerate towards others as they might be and need to think more carefully about the effect their actions are having on other pupils. I feel that you would benefit from meeting and learning about people from schools and communities that are quite different from your own and I have asked the school to look at ways that this can be provided. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Keith Bardon

Lead inspector

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