

Lower Fields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132182
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	341301
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
Reporting inspector	David Matthews

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	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Dine
Headteacher	Mr J Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, spoke to parents and carers, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work; and scrutinised a range of the school's documents and records, including those relating to safeguarding, pupils' achievements, attendance and the school's monitoring of teaching. Parents and carers returned 71 questionnaires.

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

- pupils' progress in mathematics through Key Stage 2, particularly for girls
- pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1
- attendance
- the impact of leadership and management on standards.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average school. About one third of the pupils are from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is approximately twice the national average and the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A higher proportion joins or leaves the school during the school year than is usual. The school has a range of nationally recognised awards, including awards for promoting pupils' health and their environmental awareness. The school can provide out-of-school care for 24 children aged from four to 11. This provision was inspected as part of the inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Lower Fields Primary is a good school where pupils do well because they receive good-quality care and support and because they respond positively to the school's expectations of good progress and personal development. The school has worked successfully to address the issues from the last inspection. Effective strategies have been introduced to raise pupils' attainment, so that standards are broadly average by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a significant improvement. Nevertheless, the school is far from complacent. Through its accurate self-evaluation the school knows what it needs to do to continue to improve and it has strategies in place to enable this to happen. Its priorities rightly include raising attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and making sure that all pupils in Key Stage 2 do as well as possible in mathematics. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been below average in recent years. While pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is good overall, they have had too many historical gaps in their mathematical learning to be able to build their mathematical understanding as quickly as they have developed their skills in English and science. The school's good track record of improvement, its accurate self-evaluation and its well-conceived strategies to bring about further improvement combine with real determination to give it good capacity to sustain its improvements.

Pupils develop many good personal qualities. Behaviour is good, including in the childcare provision. Pupils feel safe and they contribute well to the school and wider community. Attendance is barely average and the school is aware that more could be done to improve it.

Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage provide a secure environment where good relationships help children to settle quickly and feel secure and confident. While there are examples of good practice here, there is scope to further improve the satisfactory provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 by ensuring that teaching is good in all classes.
- Ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - quickly identifying those making relatively slower progress
 - providing timely and effective support.
- Improve attendance by rigorously developing the range and effectiveness of

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strategies to encourage pupils to attend regularly.

- Fully implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
 - the assessment of children's learning is rigorously and consistently used to plan what they will learn next
 - there are links with other settings
 - parents and carers of Nursery children know who their child's key worker is.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In lessons pupils behave well. In the best lessons they show impressive commitment to the tasks that they are set and behaviour is exemplary. Pupils show they can work together constructively, as when appraising each other's writing in Year 6. In nearly all lessons pupils work enthusiastically at their tasks. Where the teaching is less effective, however, pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration and behaviour is satisfactory rather than good. Sometimes, in the youngest pupils' classes, pupils' learning slows because too much time is spent on behaviour management.

Children join the school with understanding, knowledge and skills at levels below those expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment is broadly average. This represents good progress during their time at the school. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory because although pupils make good progress in Year 2, their progress is slower in Year 1. Pupils of different ages and gender achieve well, as do those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, on occasions the progress of some groups slows for a time. This is where teaching is less effective.

Where teaching is best, progress accelerates, as in parts of Key Stage 2 where teachers' skills have been used effectively to improve pupils' performance, notably that of boys in English. Pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly girls' progress, is improving, though it does not match that in English and science because there remain historical gaps in pupils' mathematical learning that are now being filled, for example through intervention groups.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a keen understanding of ethical issues such as those relating to the Earth's finite resources and they benefit from a range of visitors from various cultural backgrounds to whom they respond positively. Their awareness of keeping themselves safe includes heightened understanding of potential risks when using the internet. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, and several say in their questionnaires that they appreciate the school's efforts. 'My school is the best because it gives us healthy food,' was one comment. Pupils are developing satisfactorily the skills they will need for the next phase of their education and the world of work. They know how to get on well with others and apply these skills well; though their basic skills in literacy and numeracy are not yet well developed and attendance is barely average. Absence in the school is attributable to a range of causes, the most significant being illness, while other reasons include holidays in term-time and unauthorised absence in excess of 10 days. A recent

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improvement is resulting from the school's new strategies for improving attendance that include the appointment of a member of staff specifically for this purpose.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships and good organisational skills are evident in most lessons. Teachers are skilled in the use of interactive whiteboards to support and stimulate pupils, and they give pupils a good understanding of what they will learn through clear explanations. Marking is often effective in providing pupils with helpful information about how to improve. Teachers are skilled at making their own effective resources, such as those to support pupils' writing. They use assessment information increasingly well to set pupils tasks that suit their needs, including now in mathematics. In the best lessons teachers provide well for the range of pupils' differing learning styles. In the less effective lessons work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and teachers do not sustain a brisk enough pace to engage all pupils fully and this, at times, applies to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' understanding of

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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environmental issues and to sustainable development. A wide range of themes and subjects makes learning relevant and meaningful. Numerous visitors and visits out make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and residential visits enrich pupils' experiences further. A variety of after-school clubs appeal to pupils and promote their keen participation. Outdoor provision is a particular strength. One pupil wrote, 'The playground is good and it is a fun school.' Additional opportunities in music, such as to learn to play an instrument, are less well represented and the curriculum links between Reception and Year 1 are not as coherent as they might be. Good-quality intervention programmes effectively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those with personal development and other needs, including those experiencing bereavement. Support for vulnerable pupils is good as is that for pupils at risk of exclusion. 'I feel really good when the teachers help me,' wrote one pupil. Most teachers promote pupils' good behaviour positively in lessons, but there are a few inconsistencies that hinder a coherent whole-school approach. The school has appointed a member of staff to promote attendance and the latest figures show some signs of improvement. However, the school does not do as much as it could to encourage all pupils to attend regularly.

Pupils really enjoy the out-of-school childcare provision, where relationships are strongly supportive; all activities enthuse pupils and are enjoyable. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management embed ambition well and have successfully brought about improvements in standards by systematically monitoring teaching and learning, and using this together with strategies for improving pupils' achievements. Senior leaders monitor lessons using well-focused criteria linked to the school's priorities. Teachers are informed how they might best improve their teaching and these issues become the focus of the next monitoring visit. This results in continued improvements to teaching. The school has also set minimum targets for pupils in Key Stage 2 that are helping the improvements in achievement to be sustained. Middle managers and subject leaders have an increasingly good impact on pupils' learning. However, the ample data on pupils' attainments does not yet result in subject leaders having an up-to-date well-informed overview of the progress of different groups.

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The school promotes equality of opportunity well. A local authority audit of the performance of different groups of pupils, including those from the various ethnic backgrounds, found no significant differences. However, the school has accurately identified where further improvements can be made to overcome any remaining minor variations in performance and has good strategies to tackle them.

The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is good, including the school's out-of-hours childcare provision. Its policies, strategies and procedures for all aspects of child protection and safeguarding are clear and thorough. Many are reflected in the curriculum and the school's effective work in helping pupils to stay safe.

The school promotes community cohesion well and the impact of its work is felt strongly in the school where pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other. There are effective links with the local community. Beyond this the school has international links, including one with a school in Gambia. Global links remain to be fully extended, however.

The role of the governing body has improved since the last inspection and governors are increasingly involved in evaluating the school's work. However, they are not yet central to the school's strategic planning.

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and they enjoy their learning. Learning is more effective in the Reception classes than in the Nursery because there is a better focus on the learning and development requirements of the

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Early Years Foundation Stage. Even here, however, where children's learning is regularly assessed, the information gained is not rigorously used to plan what individuals need to learn next. There are effective arrangements for children's health and safety, although parents and carers of Nursery children have not been informed who their child's key worker is. Reception children who are falling behind are effectively identified, as are those who are more able. A good feature of the provision is the additional support that such children receive. Adults throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage provide a secure environment where relationships are good, and there is a good balance of teacher-led activities and those from which children can choose. Indoors, particularly in Reception, there is good provision for planned, purposeful play. Nursery plans tend to focus on what the children will do rather than what they will learn from each activity. Outdoor space is regularly accessible. One boy chose to go outside in the rain 'to drive his car to the garage for repairs'. The outside provision of the Nursery, though similarly accessible, does not promote progress across all areas of children's learning as well as possible.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led with good knowledge and understanding of the requirements for this age group. Monitoring of provision, particularly of the Nursery, is not as rigorous as it might be. In Reception there is a good overview of strengths and relative weaknesses that contribute to plans for future improvement. There are missed opportunities for links with other Early Years settings.

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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school in their questionnaire responses. They appreciate the way the school cares for their children and describe the care of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or other needs, as strong. Typical of the responses were, 'My child enjoys school,' 'There is a happy and calm atmosphere,' and, 'Please keep up the good work and thank you.' Inspection findings concur with parents' and carers' positive views.

Two responses expressed concern that all adults should be suitably checked before working with children. However, inspectors found that the school has thorough systems to ensure that all adults are systematically vetted.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lower Fields 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 473 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	58	30	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	46	37	52	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	48	35	49	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	49	34	48	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	62	24	34	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	54	30	42	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	45	33	46	5	7	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)	31	44	37	52	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	42	39	55	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	51	28	39	4	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	38	40	56	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	51	34	48	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	58	29	41	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.



18 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lower Fields Primary School, Bradford BD4 8RG

Thank you for making the team of inspectors welcome and for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you. I am writing to tell you what we found out. You told us how much you like the space at your school and all the equipment that you can play on outside. You said that you feel welcome and safe and that adults make sure you behave well and don't hurt others. You said there is hardly ever any bullying, but once there was and you said your headteacher 'really sorted it out'!

There are many good things about your school. These include your behaviour and your good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. You are keen to take on responsibilities in and around the school. Those of you who attend the childcare provision have a really happy time there. You enjoy the after-school clubs and your learning in lessons. You make good progress. The school takes good care of you.

While these aspects of your school are good, the inspectors think that a few things could be better. We have asked the headteacher, other staff and governors to improve the school by:

- helping those of you in Key Stage 1 to do even better in your writing, reading and mathematics
- making sure that all of you in Key Stage 2 make the best possible progress in mathematics
- strongly encouraging all of you to attend school regularly so you learn as much as possible
- helping those of you in Reception and Nursery to learn as well as you can.

You can help by coming to school regularly and by continuing to try hard with your work.

Thank you once again for helping the inspectors.

Yours sincerely

David Matthews

Lead inspector

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