



Bromsgrove Meadows First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116662
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279868
Inspection dates 10 January 2006 to 11 January 2006
Reporting inspector Rob Hubbleday HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stourbridge Road
School category	Community		Bromsgrove
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Worcestershire B61 0AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 872508
Number on roll	411	Fax number	01527 574975
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Wetton
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Pam Townsend

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 10 January 2006 - 11 January 2006	Inspection number 279868
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is housed in Victorian buildings and more recently-erected mobile classrooms. Purpose-built accommodation is planned to open in 2008. The school serves the north of the town where there is a wide range of types of housing. At 9%, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly below average, as is the figure of 14% for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Nearly all of the pupils are of White British heritage. The school receives pupils from 15 private nurseries and playgroups. Attainment at the beginning of the Reception year spans a wide range and is average overall.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspectors judge the school to be good, in keeping with its own view. It has many strengths and is a happy and stimulating place for children to be educated. Parents are delighted with the way their children are looked after, and the quality of support for each pupil, whatever their needs, is outstanding. The pupils behave extremely well and are eager to attend. They like the stimulating lessons, the friendliness of all the adults and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. The quality of teaching is good and enables the pupils to achieve well.

The school has built on its strengths since its last inspection. Actions taken by the leadership team have secured a rise in standards in Years 3 and 4, so they are now generally above average. Throughout the school, teachers have been encouraged to deepen the pupils' understanding of ideas through more active styles of learning. Effective provision in the Reception classes enables the youngest pupils to make at least satisfactory progress across all areas of learning and reach the expected goals for their age. In the rest of the school, the most able pupils and those with special learning needs do particularly well. Average and lower-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress but the standard of their writing is often poorer than their reading and mathematics.

The headteacher and her senior team provide good leadership and are ably supported by a governing body of outstanding quality. The school knows its strengths and its areas for development. It accepts that its monitoring of teaching has lacked a coherent focus and that it has not used assessment information as well as it might in the Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, the school's resourcefulness and the energy and commitment of all the teachers mean that it provides good value for money and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise the standards in writing of the average and lower-attaining pupils by ensuring that basic skills are more securely established by the end of Year 2.
- make better use of assessment information at the Foundation Stage by gaining a more accurate picture of attainment at the beginning of the Reception year and setting broad targets to achieve by the end of the year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils settle well in the Reception year and quickly gain confidence and the personal, social and learning skills to make secure progress in the future. They develop a broad range of understanding across all the areas of learning and make at least satisfactory progress by the end of the year. They have good opportunities to make decisions for themselves and to achieve the expected goals for their age before entering Year 1.

Their rate of progress quickens at Key Stage 1 and is often good. The school sets realistically ambitious targets for the pupils as they move up through the school and nearly all the pupils reach or exceed these. The standards achieved in the national tests were slightly above average in 2005 and were better in mathematics and reading than in writing. In all subjects, significantly more pupils than in other schools achieved high scores and, unusually, the boys performed better than the girls. Average and lower-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing but do not achieve higher standards because of weak spelling, punctuation and handwriting.

The pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and standards last year were generally above average, representing a marked improvement from previous years. The boys made particularly good gains in literacy. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 4 is in line with what is expected for their age, which reflects their lower attainment on entry to the school rather than a slowing of progress.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make very good progress because of a wide range of well-focused programmes of support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils thoroughly enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning, although some remain too passive in lessons. Behaviour in and around school is good and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and enables them to develop a sensitive approach to life and everyday issues, and to appreciate the achievement of others. Pupils are proud of their school and value what it provides. They feel safe from problems such as bullying. The school has worked successfully to raise attendance, which is now above average.

The pupils contribute well to the school and local community. They show initiative, enjoy responsibility and develop good team-working skills. The school council is effective in contributing to the day-to-day life of the school. All the pupils gain a good awareness of those less fortunate than themselves through fund raising for charities and good causes. The pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and have a clear understanding of the need for safety, regular exercise and healthy eating. They enjoy the fresh fruit available for them each day and thrive on the many sporting events and activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good in most lessons and never less than satisfactory. There are strengths across the school. The joint planning in year group teams ensures a strong consistency in the pupils' experiences. Relationships between teachers and the pupils are unfailingly good so that lessons proceed smoothly. Activities are clearly built around relevant learning objectives and there are well-understood routines to help the pupils know what they need to do. The teachers have developed the range

of teaching and learning strategies so that pupils have regular opportunities to explore and understand new learning using all of their senses. They are encouraged to ask questions and to discuss their emerging ideas. The teachers assess work carefully and plan follow-up activities accordingly. The imaginative use of resources, including interactive whiteboards, enlivens learning and helps to explain why the pupils enjoy their lessons so much. The pupils, especially the boys, have responded particularly well to the introduction of short films as a stimulus for writing.

Where the teaching was satisfactory, the pupils were less involved in lessons, especially in whole-class discussions. The teaching assistants, who usually made a good contribution to the quality of work, were not always deployed productively during this part of lessons, for example, by sitting next to reticent pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is effectively organised so that lessons build systematically on what has gone before. Activities are well chosen to spark the pupils' interest and make learning enjoyable, for instance, by enabling them to explore ideas and make discoveries for themselves. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly good and is based on precise knowledge of each pupil's needs. This level of support builds confidence and improves the pupils' personal, physical and academic skills very well. The range of activities outside normal lessons is outstanding and significantly enriches the pupils' cultural and sporting experiences. They are very well attended. The French club and the literacy and numeracy 'share' clubs enhance the pupils' skills in readiness for the world beyond school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The very strong emphasis on care and support makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress and their eagerness to learn. Inspectors confirm the parents' confidence that children are safe and well cared for. Procedures for child protection are effective and pupils work in a safe environment. Safety and health checks are undertaken regularly, and rigorous risk assessments are carried out before pupils go on visits. The importance the school gives to promoting healthy lifestyles effectively shapes the pupils' attitudes to health, diet and physical activities. When a teacher in a Year 2 assembly referred to 'knowing what is safe for our own bodies', the pupils' comments showed they understood.

In class, the pupils receive much ongoing praise, support and encouragement. The teachers mark work carefully and give clear guidance as to how it can be improved. Support for pupils with learning, behavioural, emotional or physical difficulties is outstanding. The nurturing and behaviour recovery programmes are highly successful and reflect the school's determination to give each pupil every opportunity to achieve the best of which they are capable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has given a clear and energetic lead to strengthen the school's distinctive ethos as a friendly and supportive school while improving its academic performance at Key Stage 2. In addition, she has successfully focused on improving the range and quality of the pupils' experiences in lessons and beyond the classrooms. Her openness and enthusiasm permeate the school and have ensured that she has taken staff with her. She has been well supported by a strong leadership team, each of whom is trusted to initiate and lead developments. The school has clearly shown the capacity to continue moving forward.

The assessment co-ordinator has a good understanding of data and oversees a comprehensive system of recording and analysing information, which is used to identify underachievement. The resulting actions, such as arranging extra teaching in small groups, have been effective. The school has not used assessment with the same clarity at the Foundation Stage, although the teachers compile careful records of progress.

Formal monitoring of teaching by senior postholders has given the school a general understanding of the strength of its work across the school. However, because lesson observations have usually not focused on specific themes linked to the school's improvement plan, some aspects of self-evaluation lack sharpness. Nevertheless, the improvement plan is well organised and provides an effective tool for managing developments.

The high level of consultation between the school and its parents is a strength. A detailed survey of their views is sought each year and several of the school's routines have been amended as a result. The school works very well with the local providers of nursery education and with the nearby middle school to lessen any anxieties pupils may have. There is excellent liaison with a wide range of agencies who support individual pupils with disabilities. The quality of governance is outstanding. The chair has an astute understanding of the school's position and its values and has worked energetically with the headteacher to shape the school's responses to its circumstances. His leadership has included a detailed review and reform of the way the governing body operates, which has considerably enhanced the governors' insight into issues and their involvement in decision making.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Bromsgrove Meadows First School Stourbridge Road Bromsgrove Worcestershire

13 January 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent finding out about the work you do. We were sorry we couldn't talk to more of you but our meeting with members of the school council was very helpful. These are the things we particularly liked:

- all the inspectors were very impressed by your behaviour, and were pleased that you worked hard in lessons and also enjoyed school
- we saw that the teachers made sure your lessons were interesting and were always ready to help you. It is not surprising that children at this school do well in the tests which pupils take every year across the country
- many of you spoke confidently in class discussions but a few of you need to make more of an effort to get involved
- we think that your school takes really good care of you because there is always an adult who knows how to help you if you feel worried, angry or frustrated. You don't often have these problems because there is so much going on to keep your minds busy
- all the clubs, visits and other activities during the day make your school an exciting place to come to and we noticed that you don't have many days off.

We think your headteacher and all the adults who help her run the school are doing a good job in making the school better and better. We have said there are two things which would improve it even more:

- firstly, they need to make sure that more of you can write neatly, spell better and use full stops and capital letters before you go into Year 3
- secondly, they need to find out more about what you know and can do when you join the school in Reception so they can have a clearer idea of what you need to learn during the rest of the year.

We are sure that your school will carry on being somewhere you are proud to go.

All our best wishes

Rob Hubbleday Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools