



Bridgtown Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124067
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281620
Inspection dates 2 May 2006 to 3 May 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Knight AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	North Street
School category	Community		Cannock
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Staffordshire WS11 0AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 510201
Number on roll	322	Fax number	01543 510202
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Julie-Ann Darby
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr Stephen Jones

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bridgtown is an average sized school serving an area of some socio-economic disadvantage in Cannock. The school has been subject to prolonged discussions about reorganisation of education in the area, culminating in the planned closure of another local school. The school is expected to expand as a result. Most of the senior leaders retired recently and a new deputy headteacher was appointed from January 2006. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was absent and the new deputy headteacher was acting as headteacher, with an acting deputy headteacher to support him. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than in most schools. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's view that it provides a satisfactory quality of education and satisfactory value for money. Children enter the Nursery with standards below those normally found. Sound provision in Nursery and Reception helps them make satisfactory progress but, when they enter Year 1, they have not reached the standards expected.

Achievement in the school is satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 1 and in Years 5 and 6. Teaching overall is satisfactory, but it is good in Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6 because the teaching in these year groups makes sharper use of assessment information to match tasks closely to pupils' needs. In Years 2 and Year 6, standards in National Curriculum tests are higher than average, except for English in Year 6 which was average.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Good relationships are a feature of all classrooms. Pupils show positive attitudes and behave well. However, despite the school's efforts, attendance remains unsatisfactory.

Satisfactory leadership and management have been factors in maintaining above average standards in the school. The retirement of key managers and recent uncertainty about the future of local schools has slowed improvement. However, this has been resolved and, with the appointment of a new deputy headteacher in January, the pace of improvement has accelerated markedly. Recent initiatives include the introduction of more frequent assessment to track long term progress, and rigorous monitoring of teaching. Short term assessment to guide teaching and learning is being introduced and is already used well in Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6. However, this use is not consistent across the school. The progress made by the school in addressing the key issues of the last inspection indicates a sound capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more consistent use of short term assessment and individual target setting so that tasks are always matched closely to pupils' needs and pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the use of long term tracking data and other monitoring outcomes to raise standards for all pupils, especially in English in Key Stage 2.
- Work closely with parents to improve rates of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement in the school is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with standards that are below average, especially in communication, language and literacy. Satisfactory provision in the Nursery and Reception classes enables them to make sound progress, although they do not reach the standards expected when they enter Year 1.

Progress is good in Key Stage 1, and attainment in Year 2 is above average, although relatively few pupils gain the higher Level 3. Standards in writing are a particular strength because the school has changed its scheme to suit the needs of its pupils better. The subject is taught in small groups with effective support from teaching assistants.

In Years 3 and 4, pupils make satisfactory progress. The rate of progress moves back up a gear in Years 5 and 6, and standards in Year 6 are above average in mathematics and science. However, the strength in literacy in Key Stage 1 is not reflected in standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The school recognises that progress in English across Key Stage 2 is just satisfactory and initiatives are in place to address this. There are no groups within the school who underachieve significantly. The school sets targets for future attainment that are based on past performance and are adequately challenging. Pupils are on track to meet those targets. Satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to make the same sound progress overall as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. In the Nursery and Reception, children make sound progress in their personal and social skills. However, in Reception, the importance of listening carefully is not always effectively promoted during whole class activities. Throughout the school, pupils behave well and work happily together. They relate well to each other and to adults. They are friendly and polite, show positive attitudes and enjoy school.

Despite the school's sound plans to improve matters, attendance remains unsatisfactory. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community, and the school has recently improved the way in which their views are gathered by introducing a questionnaire. Older pupils lead games and help younger pupils in the playground at lunchtimes. Plans are well advanced to introduce a school council. Because the school is improving its work to ensure that pupils learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle, pupils' understanding is improving and is satisfactory. For example, many take an active interest in the sound range of clubs the school makes available. Pupils feel safe in school because they understand and adopt safe practices. The sound progress pupils make in their learning and their satisfactory skills in forming relationships prepare them well for the next stage of their education and, eventually, for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6, it is good. In all classes, good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults ensure that

lessons proceed in a calm atmosphere. Teachers know pupils well and, in the best lessons, use this knowledge to ensure that each pupil is challenged at just the right level. As a result, pupils are motivated, work hard on challenging tasks and learn well. Teachers in Key Stage 1 are mindful of pupils' weak literacy skills on entry to the school and provide plenty of opportunities for them to develop their skills of speaking and listening. Pupils respond well to these opportunities and this is one reason why standards are good in English in National Curriculum tests. However, assessment information is not consistently used to match tasks closely to pupils' needs, particularly in Years 3 and 4 and consequently the pace of learning here is slower. Planning in Years 5 and 6 is carefully directed towards each pupil's needs, with the effect that progress is good. Teaching assistants are well deployed throughout the school. For example, they support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities well by explaining what the teacher has said and by encouraging pupils to take a full part in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Teaching in Nursery and Reception takes proper account of national guidance. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught in Key Stages 1 and 2 and statutory requirements are met. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have their needs met satisfactorily through individual education plans and support in lessons.

Information and communication technology is not used adequately to support learning in all subjects. However, it is a current school focus and computer-linked whiteboards are used satisfactorily to support teaching.

The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of out of school activities. Visitors to school make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Some, such as the local police and the road safety officer, focus well on the need for a safe lifestyle. Well planned visits to places of interest enrich many areas of the curriculum and learning is further reinforced and extended during the themed days that support these visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pupils say that staff take their concerns seriously. Child protection procedures are secure and understood by all staff. Visitors to school, including the local police, ensure that pupils are aware of 'stranger danger' and know how to react. Risk assessments for activities on and offsite are undertaken thoroughly. New procedures for keeping track of pupils' learning and personal development are being introduced. The learning needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are carefully worked out, and sound individual education plans are drawn up to help them make satisfactory progress. In some classes, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, teachers use good procedures to involve pupils in their own learning in mathematics and writing, and a new target-setting system is giving pupils a clearer

view of how they will be assessed and where they need to focus their efforts to improve their work. This is not yet consistent throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management have enabled the school to maintain good standards since the last inspection. This represents satisfactory progress by the school and indicates it has a sound capacity to improve further.

The pace of improvement has quickened following final decisions about local school closures and the appointment of a new deputy headteacher in January. The process of school self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school has established rigorous procedures to track pupils' progress in every year group and to monitor teaching. Questionnaires for parents and pupils have been used to gain their views on the school. Rigorous analysis of both data and the outcomes of these activities has ensured that the school has a clear idea of its strengths and areas for development, which are realised in the sound development plan. However, the school is aware that the governing body is not involved in the plan's production early enough. The school is also aware that it does not include criteria by which to judge its success nor identify how progress will be measured.

Subject leaders in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are supporting improvement well in their subjects. For example, the causes for the recent decline in English achievement in Key Stage 2 have been investigated and action has been taken to address them.

The chair of governors is knowledgeable, understands the school's strengths and weaknesses well and holds the school to account. However, this is not always reflected in the minutes of meetings of the full governing body.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

As you know, we recently visited your school to see how well it is doing. Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we visited lessons or chatted to you.

Some parts of your school are doing a good job. We noticed how well you get along with each other and with adults in the school. You were really polite to us in lessons and on the corridors. Teachers in some classes make sure your work is hard, but not too hard, and so you do well there. In those classes, you were able to tell us just how well you were doing, what your targets were and how you were trying to get better. The school has started to improve how it checks how well you do and how good a job it is doing. We've asked the school to make sure every lesson is as good as the best ones are now. You can help by always trying hard in lessons, even if the work seems a bit different. Not everyone does as well in English in the juniors as they could. Your teachers know this and we've asked them to carry on working hard to make sure everyone does as well as they can. The school is trying hard to improve your attendance but still some of you don't attend often enough to do really well.

We were sorry that Mr Williams couldn't be at the school while we were there. Please wish him well for us and carry on working hard so that you all do the best you can.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Knight Lead inspector