

# The Bromley-Pensnett Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103812
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	286772
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 February 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Cole

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	328
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	D Sheldon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rhys Hywel Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2001
<b>School address</b>	Bromley Pensnett Brierley Hill DY5 4PJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 816865
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 816868

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large primary school serves an area with a significant level of social deprivation. Pupils, almost all of whom are White British, start school with attainment which is well below average. A relatively high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The number with more pronounced levels of difficulty is considerably higher than in most schools. The headteacher has been absent on sick leave for a period of three months, including the week of the inspection. During this time the school has been led in turn by three acting headteachers.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. This contrasts with the school's more generous view of itself as satisfactory. Achievement is inadequate and standards are exceptionally low, especially in English and science, although progress in mathematics is satisfactory. The slow progress made by pupils is as a result of inadequate teaching. Leadership and management are inadequate and progress since the last inspect has been unsatisfactory. Very high levels of staff turnover and sickness absence in the last eighteen months have led to many temporary staffing arrangements. This has seriously hindered attempts to improve the school. Leadership of the school has been hampered by the continuing absence of the headteacher and long-standing vacancies in two other senior positions.

The school staff show goodwill, professionalism and commitment in their efforts to meet the pupils' needs. Relationships with each other and with the pupils are good. There is a good atmosphere in the school. However, the poor past record of school improvement since the last inspection and the persistent lack of continuity in senior leadership mean that the school does not currently demonstrate a sufficient capacity to improve.

Although pupils' academic progress is too slow, they do make satisfactory progress in their personal development and well-being. This reflects the satisfactory quality of the care, support and guidance they are given. In many respects pupils are looked after and supported well, though guidance for them on how to improve in their work has limited impact. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance have improved significantly in recent months and are now satisfactory. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities for helping around the school. This is assisting pupils to prepare for the demands of adult and working life; however, their slow academic progress, especially in literacy, is not.

A major reason for the inadequate teaching is the lack of consistency and continuity for the pupils as gaps created by leaving or absent teachers are frequently filled by temporary staff. However, lessons are now generally purposeful, soundly planned and orderly events. They have only limited success in arousing pupils' interest and enthusiasm, but pupils generally get on with their work, even if at a sometimes leisurely pace.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Recently improved provisions at the Foundation Stage have improved progress and this is now good. However, this has not yet raised standards to any great degree and these continue to be low. A good range of activities after lessons extends pupils' opportunities and enjoyment.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Bring greater continuity to the membership and work of both the senior leadership team and the staff as a whole, in order to raise standards as quickly as possible.
- Improve the quality and consistency of the teaching so that pupils make more rapid progress.
- Improve pupils' achievement, especially in English and science.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Overall, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because they do not make enough long-term progress. As a result, their standards are exceptionally low. However, children in the Foundation Stage are currently progressing satisfactorily and pupils with the most pronounced learning difficulties are making good progress. Results in national tests taken by pupils in Years 2 and 6 have been exceptionally low in almost all of the last five years. The Year 6 pupils' best results were in 2005. However, in the following year, changes of teaching staff, staff absences and some unsatisfactory behaviour led pupils to do less well in the 2006 tests. Results showed pupils, especially boys, had made poor progress in English and science since they were in Year 2. However, they had made satisfactory progress in mathematics. With recent improvements in teachers' assessment and planning, in behaviour, and in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, short-term progress has improved in recent months. The improvement is not sufficient, though, for pupils to have made up more than a little of the lost ground from previous months and years.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly learn to sit and listen well and to enjoy learning. In later years, enjoyment is satisfactory but varies a good deal from class to class. Older pupils' behaviour dipped in 2005/06 when they were taught by a significant number of temporary staff. One pupil said, 'I felt all muddled up!' Strong leadership from the acting headteacher and a revised whole-school approach to managing behaviour have successfully restored generally good order to lessons. Pupils are attentive to teacher-led parts of lessons, but some show reluctance to answer questions and lack motivation when working independently. Attendance at school is below average but improving in response to the school's strenuous efforts to gain parental support in this matter. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding about healthy lifestyles and many join in opportunities for exercise through after-school clubs such as football. They understand the importance of healthy eating, though a good many do not act accordingly. Pupils know how to stay safe. They make a satisfactory contribution to the community, as for example, when older pupils befriend younger ones in the playground. The school council takes its role seriously and is appreciative that teachers listen to and often act on its views.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

At the present time, most of the teaching is soundly planned to meet the range of pupils' abilities and needs. New approaches to assessing pupils are effectively used to put pupils in groups or sets for work matching their needs. The setting of pupils for mathematics is helping to promote sound progress in this subject. Teachers generally manage pupils well so that lessons are calm and cooperative events. The main reason for the insufficient impact that the teaching makes on pupils' progress is the frequency of change within the teaching staff. This leads to inconsistency in quality and approach. Quite often, the teaching does not sufficiently engage

pupils' interest, concentration or effort. The marking of work is very variable and often gives pupils too little help to understand how to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The newly improved Foundation Stage curriculum is providing well for the younger children. In later years, there are appropriate programmes of work in English and mathematics but these do not always lead to sufficient progress because of inconsistencies in teaching. There is very thorough early assessment of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, or behavioural difficulties. Very good programmes of work support those with the greatest difficulties. There are sound opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology, and this promotes enjoyment. Good provision in music results in a good standard of singing. Suitably planned programmes of personal, social and health education and of physical education encourage pupils to make co-operative relationships and be healthy. A good range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs enriches pupils' experiences and adds to their cultural awareness and social development. Pupils visit different places of worship, and they also participate in a good number of sporting and creative activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils receive good levels of care and feel able to share problems with adults. Child protection and other procedures to safeguard pupils are good. Vulnerable children and those in difficulty are well supported by a team of vigilant staff, including a learning mentor. Pupils say they feel safe and value the improvement in behaviour. Lunchtime procedures are carefully planned to give pupils a range of interesting activities. There are satisfactory arrangements for settling children new to the school and on transfer to secondary school. Pupils have guidance from targets for improved work but do not always recall or understand them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The changing, incomplete and often temporary nature of the school's senior leadership team over the last two years has seriously held back attempts to improve the school. Some potentially valuable changes, such as in procedures for assessing pupils and planning lessons, have been made. These are the basis of the school viewing itself more positively than inspectors. However, these developments have so far led to only a small recent improvement in progress. This is because high staff turnover makes it difficult to implement and consolidate new initiatives. For the same reason, checks on teaching and guidance to staff from senior managers or external advisers have had only limited impact. The many staff changes have led many parents to lose confidence in the school.

Governors have not monitored and challenged the school's performance and have made insufficient impact on school improvement. They have begun to be more effective recently but have been hindered by a lack of suitably qualified or experienced applicants when trying to appoint staff. After a long period of vacancy, two senior management posts have been filled only very recently and one of the appointed persons has yet to take up the post.

The acting headteacher has successfully extended the trend in recent months toward better pupil behaviour and closer staff teamwork, particularly by harnessing the enthusiasm and expertise of four newly appointed middle managers. External advice has helped key staff to develop a sound understanding of what the school must do to improve, recognising that achieving stability of personnel at all levels of the school staff is the top priority.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	4
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

The inspectors who visited your school recently would like to thank all of you for your friendly welcome. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you.

We were pleased to see that there are times when you enjoy school. We also noticed that there are other times when you do not find work in lessons very interesting. Your behaviour is satisfactory on the whole. Most of you behave well, but a few of you occasionally let the rest down. You generally get on well with each other and with the adults. They look after you well, although they could give you more help to know how to improve your work. They give you suitable work to do and the after-school clubs are a good thing which we know you enjoy.

Your school is not as good as it should be. As you know, there have been lots of changes amongst the teachers. When this keeps happening it interrupts your progress and makes the learning unsatisfactory, especially in literacy and science.

There have also been too many changes amongst the adults in charge of the school. Because of this, the school is not run as well as it should be and it is not improving fast enough.

There are three things we have asked the school to do so that you can do better at school:

- to make sure it has all the adults it needs to improve your school and that the people doing the most important jobs do not keep changing;
- to cut down on the changes in teachers and improve the teaching;
- to see that you make better progress, particularly in literacy and science.

We have arranged for other inspectors to keep a close eye on whether the school is improving.

We wish you all the best for the future.