

# Brackenhill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107250
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	287759
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julie Price Grimshaw

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>	Primary
<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	263
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Julie Hields
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jean Blackburn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2001
<b>School address</b>	Dracup Road Bradford West Yorkshire BD7 4HA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 578286
<b>Fax number</b>	01274 523625

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a slightly larger than average primary school serving an area of some social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average and the majority of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school has been awarded Activemark and has Investors in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Brackenhill Primary is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. It has a very strong caring community ethos and parents are particularly appreciative of the school's work: a typical view is that, 'This is a caring establishment where children have fun.' Some successful work is being developed in partnership with parents: for example, through the provision of 'Share' classes, which focus on how parents can support their children's learning at home. The school building is a pleasant learning environment, with attractive displays featuring high quality pupils' art work.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children's skills on entry to the Nursery varies from year-to-year, but is generally well below average. In the Foundation Stage, they benefit from good quality teaching and support within a rich learning environment. Parents recognise the strengths of this provision: several commented that, 'My child has had a great start in education.' As a result of this, they make good progress and enter Year 1 with below average standards. Satisfactory teaching and learning throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 result in pupils making satisfactory progress overall. Although national test results from previous years indicate some underachievement, the most recent test results show that there has been a significant improvement in the standards attained. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average overall, although attainment in writing remains an area of weakness. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes towards learning. Much emphasis is placed on friendship and pupils speak with great enthusiasm about how they enjoy being with their friends. They are well-cared for and know that adults are keen to offer help and support: many expressed the view that, 'No-one is left out in this school.' They show a good awareness of issues related to healthy lifestyles and enjoy their involvement in sports activities. Their contributions to the school and local communities enrich their experience and help to ensure that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education and for the world of work. School trips, including residential visits, are extremely popular and clearly appreciated by all pupils.

Positive relationships are a strong feature of the work of the school: pupils work well with adults and with each other, being keen to answer questions and express their views. Pupils have responded enthusiastically to recent changes to the curriculum, in which teachers have started to make stronger links between subjects. As a result of strategies implemented over the past year, the rate of pupils' progress has started to improve. However, there is little consistency in the quality of teachers' planning. The needs of all pupils are not always fully considered at the planning stage and, as a consequence, some lessons do not include an adequate level of challenge for pupils, particularly the most able.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school has identified the main priorities for future development, but systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are currently too limited. As a result, elements of good practice are not effectively shared amongst staff and there is no whole-school approach to initiatives such as curriculum development. The school has made reasonable progress since the last inspection and the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards, particularly in writing.
- Ensure that lessons include a suitable level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able, so that all achieve as well as they should.
- Establish a rigorous cycle of monitoring, evaluation and action planning to ensure that best practice in teaching and learning is effectively shared.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress. A growing majority of children, from an increasing number of minority ethnic backgrounds, start school at an early stage of learning English. Children's skills on entry is significantly lower than that expected across most aspects of learning, most notably in language and social skills. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception, although by the time they enter Year 1 their standards are still below those expected for children of their age.

In recent years, standards in Years 1 to 6 have shown a decline, but the 2007 test results indicate a significant improvement. By the end of Year 2, most pupils reach the expected level but very few reach the higher levels. Prior to this year, attainment by the end of Year 6 has been below average overall, but current standards reflect the school's successful work in striving to raise standards. Standards in mathematics indicate a significant improvement, but English, most notably writing, is the weakest area. Having addressed the main weaknesses in mathematics, the school has firm plans to improve writing.

The achievement of all the different groups in the school is similar, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by their positive attitudes, their good behaviour and their enthusiasm for school. Several commented that, 'We don't just like school - we love it!' Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in learning how to be independent, to be responsible for their own actions, to be able to share and to take turns. Pupils say that they feel safe and that the rare instances of racism and bullying are dealt with promptly and efficiently. They gain a good understanding of different races and cultures and spiritual development is a real strength of the school's work. Older pupils are able to reflect sensibly on issues concerned with racism and conflict.

Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy. They make sensible choices of diet and many enjoy the nutritious and well-balanced school meals. They also understand the value of exercise for growing bodies. Pupils are particularly aware of the possible consequences of adopting a less healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy responsibility through the class and school councils, developing a strong awareness of the wider world through contributing to the local community action group and the local festival. Their developing basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the

future. Attendance is good for most children, but is adversely affected by a minority of families taking holidays during term time and extended leave abroad.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all classrooms. Teachers and support staff are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and the great majority of pupils are eager and willing learners who listen carefully and make valuable contributions to class discussions. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in classrooms is satisfactory and improving: staff are developing their skills in the use of interactive whiteboards and pupils are very keen to use the computers. Such developments are in the early stages and therefore the use of ICT has not yet had a significant impact in terms of enhancing teaching and learning. Over the past year, staff have implemented teaching strategies which have led to some improvements in pupils' attainment. For example, increased emphasis on mental calculation has resulted in higher standards in mathematics. Nevertheless, sharing of effective practice amongst staff is limited. The work of support staff is effective in enabling pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make similar progress as their classmates.

There is currently too much variability in the quality of teachers' planning. Whilst some plans reflect careful consideration of the needs of individual pupils, others are too brief, lack focus and show limited evidence of matching tasks to pupils' abilities. This occasionally leads to a lack of challenge for some pupils, particularly the most able.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and effectively meets the needs of most pupils. A good feature is the emphasis on language development, particularly in the case of pupils for whom English is an additional language. There is appropriate emphasis on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and pupils are provided with opportunities to practise these skills across a range of subjects. Recently, there has been increased emphasis on establishing stronger links between subject areas; for example, a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson on fairy tales very successfully combined elements of art, drama and personal and social education. This fresh approach to creative curriculum planning is beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning; pupils themselves are aware of the changes, commenting that 'our lessons are more fun now.' However, this initiative is not yet fully embedded across the school, and teachers' planning does not reflect a consistent whole school approach.

The curriculum effectively meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but there is not always sufficient focus on provision for the most able. There is a good range of enrichment activities, and extra-curricular clubs are well-attended.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The quality of pastoral care is high. All pupils are well supported, including those who find learning difficult and the growing majority who are learning English as an additional language. Supportive relationships mean that pupils trust and

respect the staff. The respected learning mentor is very effective in supporting pupils and parents, especially where there are family difficulties. Provision for children in public care is strong. Well-managed arrangements help pupils to feel secure when they move onto the secondary school. There are robust arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pupils.

Pupils receive satisfactory academic guidance to support their progress, although systems for assessing pupils' work and setting targets for improvement are not yet fully developed or applied consistently across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leaders and managers at all levels share a strong commitment to the welfare of their pupils. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are beginning to work well together in identifying priorities for the school's development and the recent improvement in standards reflects some of the work carried out in this area. Senior leaders have a broad understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no established cycle of monitoring, evaluation and action planning and current procedures lack rigour. This, in turn, impacts upon the development of a whole-school approach to initiatives such as creativity in curriculum planning. As yet, there is little evidence of a common approach to teachers' lesson planning and marking of pupils' work. The school has rightly identified developing the role of middle managers, such as subject coordinators, as a priority.

Governors are enthusiastic and supportive. They show unwavering commitment to raising the profile of the school within the local community and understand the importance of maintaining effective communication with parents. Whilst members of the governing body assist leaders by discussing some aspects of school management, they are not sufficiently involved in tackling issues related to pupils' standards and achievement.

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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<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>	2

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Brackenhill Primary School, Bradford, BD7 4HA.

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome in your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, hearing your views and watching you learn.

We think that Brackenhill is a satisfactory school and there are some features of its work that are good. There are so many things that we liked about your school. Some of you told us that you thought it was a 'lovely environment', and we agree with you - your artwork displays are beautiful! You clearly enjoy being with your friends and it was great to see you all getting on so well together. You told us that the school trips are fantastic: the Filey trip sounded like great fun! Your parents and carers told us that they are very pleased with the school's work and enjoy coming into school to see you work and play. It was really good to see so many people in the audience at the 'Rainforest Assembly'. We were pleased to see that nearly everyone behaves well in school and we could see that the staff are very caring towards you.

The recent national test results showed that pupils at Brackenhill are now doing better than in previous years. This is really good news and of course everyone is very pleased. We have asked the school to think about ways to make sure that standards continue to rise, especially in writing. We also think that some of you are occasionally given work that you find a little too easy, so we have asked your teachers to try and make sure that the work set is at just the right level for you. Finally, we would like the staff and governors to keep a really close check on all the developments taking place in your school, so that they get an accurate picture of what works best.

You have an important part to play in improving your school. You can help by always listening carefully to your teachers' advice and by trying extra hard to produce the best work that you possibly can, especially with your writing!

We hope that the school will continue to build on this year's successes and we wish you well for the future.