



Bamford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112504
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289300
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector John Brennan

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fidlers Well
School category	Community		Bamford, Bamford
Age range of pupils	4–11		Hope Valley, Derbyshire S33 0AR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01433 651267
Number on roll (school)	97	Fax number	01433 659091
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Keith Wilkinson
		Headteacher	Mr Neil Hobson
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006	Inspection number 289300
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school draws pupils from the village of Bamford and the surrounding area. All pupils are of White British background. Children's skills on entry to school vary from year to year but are typically above expected levels. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and other disabilities is average. The school is part of the Eco school initiative, has gained the Healthy School Award, the 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

As one parent said, and many others endorsed, the school provides 'a happy, positive environment' for pupils. Sound leadership has succeeded in pursuing many initiatives that act as a catalyst for promoting pupils' personal development. As a result this aspect of the school's work is good. Pupils here develop well as citizens. They are self-assured and considerate of others. Through the influential Eco committee pupils take responsibility for the environment. They show a strong commitment to living a healthy lifestyle, many eat healthily and they are very active, not least because of the good range of clubs they can join. The school's sensitive attitude underpins the good care the school takes of pupils. The extra help that is on hand for pupils who have learning needs and other difficulties is used effectively.

Satisfactory leadership has met with mixed success in pursuing improvement to the academic aspects of schooling. Standards are above average but pupils' achievement, taking into account their starting point, is adequate. Overall therefore, this is a satisfactory school, providing satisfactory value for money. Past weaknesses in information and communication technology (ICT) and in Reception have been tackled well. Careful attention has been paid to staff training in ICT and to giving pupils more widespread opportunities to use computers. Children's education now gets off to a good start in Reception. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well put together and teaching is lively. Revamped assessment procedures have helped the school come to an honest and accurate view of how well pupils are doing and where performance needs improving. However, the school improvement plan is not detailed enough. Too little attention, for example in improving the teaching of writing, is given to identifying staff training needs and the monitoring of lessons. This makes for inconsistencies in teaching and as a result it is satisfactory overall. Adventurous, good teaching occurs in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class and in Year 5 and 6. Pupils here progress well. Elsewhere in the school teachers expect too little of more able pupils. As a result, these pupils do not do as well as they should especially in writing and mathematics. There are strengths in the curriculum, for example in the range of clubs on offer. However, the curriculum as a whole pays too little attention to ensuring that pupils make interesting use of key skills, such as writing when they are studying other subjects. There are too few opportunities for pupils to be creative or reflective in their everyday work.

Although the leadership's view of the school is accurate the track record of achieving success is mixed which means the capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give higher attaining pupils more challenging work, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that school improvement planning is more detailed and is used effectively as a tool for taking the school forward.
- Ensure that the curriculum gives pupils more opportunities to be creative, especially in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average but, in relation to pupils' starting points, achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in Reception class and they achieve well in learning to read, write and count. Many attain beyond expected levels by the time they start Year 1. However, this good momentum is not maintained further up the school and as a result progress slows down to a satisfactory level. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities receive effective support and make steady progress. However, work in books and in lessons shows that not enough is expected of more able pupils who are capable of achieving more in mathematics and in writing. Achievement of more able pupils picks up again towards the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, where teaching becomes more adventurous. This is reflected in the results of the national tests which were at a low point in 2005. At this time results were no better than average because few pupils attained beyond expected levels. The school set more challenging targets for pupils in 2006. The indicative results for 2006 show some improvement, especially in reading and in science where approximately half of the pupils have attained beyond expected levels. However, far fewer pupils achieved the higher level in mathematics and in writing because ground lost in the middle of the school was not fully made up.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being is good and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. They are confident and mature in thought. However, they do not always make the most of these qualities because they are not commonly asked to be reflective or creative in their work. This holds back their spiritual development which forms a slightly weaker aspect of their otherwise good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many pupils eat healthily and playtimes are active and social occasions. Pupils enjoy school as reflected in their good attendance. They behave very well and, as one boy confidently put it, 'there is absolutely no bullying.' As an Eco School pupils take full responsibility for the environment and recycle enthusiastically. Pupils increasingly act as decision makers in the school. They make a strong contribution to the local community, are active fundraisers and have a good understanding of life in multi-cultural Britain. The basic skills learned at the school make a satisfactory contribution to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers form open and relaxed relationships with pupils and employ an increasing range of techniques, such as 'talking' through puppets to gain and hold pupils'

attention. All teachers are making regular use of interactive whiteboards which pupils say helps make lessons more interesting. However, the quality of questioning varies. In too many classes especially in the middle of the school too little is done to test and delve into pupils' understanding. Here teaching is not ensuring that all pupils are engaged in question and answer sessions. Improved assessment procedures give teachers a good idea of each pupil's ability but despite this too little is expected of more able pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. Too many worksheets are used. Pupils rarely draft writing or solve mathematical problems. This acts in stark contrast to the good quality of teaching in the Reception and in Years 5 and 6. Work here is more exciting, harder and has a sense of purpose. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils wrote evocative descriptions of life in London from impressions gained from an etching used as a learning resource in a history lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The many visitors to school enrich school life for pupils. There are ample opportunities for pupils to go on extended residential trips. Take up of numerous clubs, especially in sport and music, is high. The curriculum for Reception children is lively and achieves a good balance between adult and child led learning and indoor and outdoor learning. The curriculum for pupils' personal development is well thought out. These form the highpoints of an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. The curriculum is planned to ensure progression in mixed aged classes although this is not always successfully achieved. Links between subjects to promote writing and to help make learning stimulating are piecemeal. In general too little has been done to make everyday learning more creative.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The family nature of the school ensures staff know pupils well. As one parent said, and several others echoed, this makes for a 'happy and caring environment.' Formal systems underpinning this caring attitude are well thought out. Revised assessment procedures allow for prompt intervention and the identification of those who have learning difficulties. Teaching assistants are well deployed. Assessment information, although not always used well enough in pitching work at the right level for some higher attaining pupils, is generally used to good effect to give pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work. Pupils, including higher attaining pupils, are well aware of their individual targets and say that they help guide their thinking. Robust procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety, including those for child protection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher aided by other staff has helped create a school whose encouraging ethos provides well for pupils' personal development. Awards to aid this have been pursued with energy. The vast majority of parents are happy with the school. However,

as some have noted, procedures for formally seeking and acting on their views are at an early stage. Weaknesses noted in the last inspection for example in ICT, have been tackled well. Here, careful attention has been paid to training teachers. It is only recently that revamped assessment procedures have given the school a detailed picture of pupil performance. Key weaknesses are well known to the school and it is frank and honest in assessing its own effectiveness. The school improvement plan, although well directed, is not detailed enough and change has not always been pursued with enough vigour. Not enough attention has been paid to following through the plan with necessary staff training or by checking the quality of teaching and learning in relation to key changes, such as those for writing. Although changes have been suggested in the teaching of writing and mathematics not all staff have embraced these changes. In addition, lack of training has not equipped them with the necessary expertise to enable them to change their practice successfully. Governors know the school well and ask searching questions. However, the improvement plan does not clearly define their monitoring role which makes it difficult to direct visits to school to check on impact of the planned changes. With the school's sound leadership and management the capacity to make further improvements is satisfactory.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

6 October 2006

Dear Children

Bamford Primary School, Fidlers Well, Bamford, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S33 0AR

Thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit because everyone was so helpful and friendly. It was like visiting one big happy family. I would like to share with you what I thought about your school.

I could see that you behave very well and are kind to each other. Playtimes looked to be good fun. There were lots of smiles and you were running around a lot. Most of you were eating very healthily. I was very impressed with how much you do to look after the environment and recycled your leftovers.

Looking in books, visiting you in class and talking to you showed me that there is a lot of interesting work for you to do when you start school in Reception and at the end of school in Years 5 and 6. I could see how much you enjoyed work that made you think. Work in classes in the middle of school was too easy for some of you, especially in writing and mathematics. I have asked the school to think carefully how it could give those of you who find work too easy more challenging work. I have also asked the school to give you more opportunities to use your imagination in all sorts of subjects, such as history. I have asked teachers to pop into each other's classrooms more to see what is going on. You can play your part by continuing to behave well, to join in with lessons and to try hard with the targets you told me you had.

Thank you once again for your welcome. Good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead Inspector