

Becket Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112717
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	289383
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Taylor

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Wynn
Headteacher	Mrs J Bates
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Monk Street Derby DE22 3QB
Telephone number	01332347595
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school is situated in an area of significant deprivation, close to the city centre. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are extremely low compared with those found in children nationally. Approximately half of families are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and just under half of the children from these families have English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is high. Numbers of children entering and leaving mid-term are much higher than usual. An increasing number are arriving with no English. The school operates as an 'Extended School', managing a Children's Centre and Adult Learning Centre, and providing all year round study support and childcare. It educates a small number of children excluded from other schools and, immediately prior to the inspection, had started to host a designated nurture group for young children at risk of being excluded from elsewhere in the city. The school field is currently out of action because of recent building works.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Becket Primary gives a satisfactory quality of education. The school has a strong nurturing role in the local community and is pivotal in fostering both stability and engagement in education. Excellent work provides families with the skills and confidence to understand and enjoy their child's educational development, and so helps them to play a more active role. The time is right to re-focus on developing teaching, in order to improve the children's achievement, which is satisfactory. This is why the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory.

The school's partnership with others is outstanding. The headteacher has demonstrated drive and imagination in bringing together a wide range of external and childcare services, which, most importantly, have an educational steer. Care, guidance and support of children are good. Pastoral care and support for children are very strong. This is largely because of the dedication of staff, who have a growing range of support services at their fingertips. It means children are helped to develop the right frame of mind for learning because their personal, social, emotional and health needs are so well attended to. From often fragile beginnings, children become keen learners who enjoy school. Children eat healthily at school. Their overall personal development and well-being are good.

Children get off to a sound start in the Nursery and Reception classes, although few reach the standard expected by the beginning of Year 1, because they have so much ground to make up. Families are constantly leaving and arriving, often with little or no English. Typically, a fifth of the school population changes each year. The school copes very well with these challenges and children soon start to learn the English language. Overall, standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are often well below average, although children make satisfactory progress in relation to their different starting points.

Teaching is satisfactory; good relationships and skilful behaviour management ensure learning takes place in a calm, purposeful atmosphere. Teaching assistants work successfully with small groups of children, so helping them to catch up. However, specially tailored work in class, suitable to meet different ability levels, especially those of higher attaining children, is not always provided. There are not enough regular opportunities for children to converse and respond, in order for them to improve their low levels of vocabulary and understanding. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is starting to interest and engage children better and this is a continuing focus for further improvement. The school is at an early stage of developing children's writing skills across subjects other than English. Opportunities for physical activities have been curtailed because of the limits placed on the use of the grounds.

Leadership and management are sound. Leaders have worked tirelessly to assemble the ingredients needed to generate successful learning, and have made good decisions based on the needs of the area. They have correctly identified where the school needs to improve and are making this happen. Becket Primary is a vital catalyst for local community regeneration and hope. The school has good capacity to improve further given the drive and energy demonstrated leaders' experience, expertise and ongoing quest to do the best for the community. It manages its resources innovatively and successfully gains considerable amounts of extra funds for the benefit of pupils and the community, through its own efforts. The extent to which this supplements basic funding and supports children and their families mean it provides sound value for money.

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.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by tailoring work better to meet the needs of all children, especially higher attaining ones.
- Provide more opportunities to encourage the development of children's language.
- Develop teachers' skills in order to improve the quality of children's writing, including more opportunities to write imaginatively in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's academic achievement is satisfactory, when measured against their very low starting points. They make good progress in their personal development, successfully acquiring the skills and attributes needed to be successful learners. Children enter Nursery with extremely low standards, especially in their general knowledge, language development and numeracy levels. They make satisfactory progress overall. Due to the scale of need and catching up required, standards generally remain well below average at the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards are low in speaking and listening, reading and mathematical development, and even lower in writing.

Children continue to make satisfactory progress throughout Years 1 and 2. Year 2 assessments for 2006 showed children's attainment was below average in mathematics and well below average in English. By the end of Year 6, although they continued to make satisfactory progress, standards remained well below average last year. Currently, Year 6 predictions backed by accurate assessment information show standards are rising, although still well below average.

The high numbers of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those whose first language is not English achieve satisfactorily. They make similar progress to other children, because their needs are carefully understood and assessed. Work in small groups, plus special focussed programmes for new arrivals with no English, help children to gain ground quickly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children develop well personally and socially because they are consistently helped to reflect on their behaviour and how it affects others. Their overall well-being benefits hugely from the nurturing approach the school provides so well through its links with many services and organisations. This results in children becoming keen and attentive learners. They respect cultural differences, admirably shown during an assembly on Sikhism. This is indicative of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Older children talk keenly about supporting younger ones as 'buddies' and enjoy looking after one another. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and at playtimes. However, there is some rather aimless 'milling about' in the playground. Although staff join in and teach team games, space and opportunities for play have been severely restricted by recent building work issues. This is to the detriment of children's activity and enjoyment, as many have too little to do. Children understand the importance of healthy eating. Imaginative schemes, such as using the school's own bicycles, help them to keep fit and stay safe. They are satisfactorily prepared for secondary school life; they have the

right attitudes to succeed, but basic literacy and numeracy skills could be much better. Attendance rates are satisfactory but occasionally parents' timekeeping (and hence their children's) is lax.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are always characterised by warm and encouraging relationships creating calm, purposeful, happy classrooms. Good behaviour is skilfully encouraged. Children generally know what is expected of them and some know what to look for to check if they have been successful. Work in small groups taught outside the main classes, often by support staff, succeeds because activities are tailored to need, staff are well trained and the impact of learning is carefully assessed. This can, on occasion, result in a lack of in-class support, leaving teachers to manage widespread and disparate needs. It is then difficult to ensure that all children complete their work well. Sometimes work is not tailored at the right level so it is too hard for some and too easy for others. Teachers do not encourage children to communicate enough. Some successfully employ techniques such as 'talk partners' to encourage this. However, the use of language does not have a high enough profile to encourage extended responses, deepen thinking or lead to a debate about children's views.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has started to make its programme of work more interesting and engaging, for example, through making greater use of drama. However, it has yet to harness fully the benefits of teaching writing skills through other subjects. Recently, the school has been able to offer an extremely wide range of personal development opportunities and physical activities, such as growing vegetables. A funding squeeze and constraints from building work have curtailed many of these, leaving a satisfactory range. Valuable opportunities to play in a band are enjoyed by all and help children to understand self-discipline and team work. Children in the Foundation Stage have good opportunities to instigate learning for themselves but limited outdoor equipment somewhat restricts their development. The contrast from learning through play in the Foundation Stage to more formal lessons in Key Stage 1 is rather marked and challenges children's powers of concentration. Art has a strong profile with some high quality work on display.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff are strongly committed to caring for children and promoting their safety. The growing array of in-house support agencies is impressive, reflecting the excellence of the work with others to support children's personal, social, emotional and health needs. All health and safety requirements and legislation are effectively met. There is a good emphasis on helping children to understand the dangers of drug misuse. Child protection arrangements meet requirements and provision for vulnerable children is extremely good.

The school knows it needs to involve children more in deciding how to improve their work. Teachers give children targets to help them improve; some older ones are confident that they know them but others are not so sure. Children who have little or no grasp of the English

language are swiftly given appropriate intensive support enabling them to develop understanding and integrate into class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall in terms of their impact on pupils' standards. The passion and drive of the headteacher have seen Becket Primary become a leader in the way it supports children and the community through its 'Extended School' organisation, over which it has total management control. The school promotes harmony and regeneration in the community. It uses its finances imaginatively and successfully fosters strong business links to generate more income.

Senior leaders, given full responsibility for specific parts of the whole organisation, lead effectively by providing educational direction. Energy has been directed at creating a relevant extended school provision in its widest sense. It has not been one hundred per cent focused on the educational work of the school in order to improve teaching and increase the rate at which pupils make academic progress. The challenge now is to raise standards further so that the children's satisfactory rate of academic progress matches the good rate at which their personal, social and emotional skills are developing. Parents are positive about the school. Governance is satisfactory. Governors, led by an experienced chair, bring in a range of useful skills.

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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>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	4
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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.

Annex A

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	2
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

27 April 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Becket Primary School, Derby, DE22 3QB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. I am writing this letter to explain what we found and how you can help your teachers to make the school even better.

We know Mrs Bates and everyone does a really good job in looking after you and making sure you are happy. We think you behave really well in school and you should all be proud of yourselves. You and your families are lucky to have a school which plays such an important role in helping everyone living in your part of Derby. We understand you used to have a lot more things to do before and after school and at lunchtimes and hope you will be able to use the grounds again soon. We enjoyed listening to the band play and realise how much hard work you all put in.

We know you are doing fine in your English and mathematics work but think you could be doing even better. So we have asked your teachers to have a look at the work they are giving you, to make sure it is neither too easy nor too difficult for you. We think your writing needs to improve quite a lot, and that you should be writing in other subjects, like geography for example, and not just in English. Your teachers need to be giving you lots of chances to talk about different things (but only when they say you can!) so that you can learn and understand more new words.

Some of you know your targets, but some of you are not so sure about them. If you all knew what you had to do to improve your work, it would help you. Also, if you and your families could try and come to school each day and get to school on time, we would be pleased and so would Mrs Bates.

With best wishes for a lovely summer at school

Mrs A Taylor (with Mr Brennan and Mrs Barnes)

Lead Inspector