

The Bromley-Pensnett Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103812
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	319877
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Rob Hubbleday HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	A Smith
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
School address	Bromley Pensnett Brierley Hill DY5 4PJ
Telephone number	01384 816865
Fax number	01384 816868

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area with a significant level of social deprivation. The pupils, almost all of whom are White British, start school with very limited skills and knowledge. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The headteacher has been absent since November 2006 and the school is led by the deputy headteacher on a formal contract as the acting headteacher. Three senior teachers share responsibility for the deputy headteacher's role. A newly built children's centre on the site is due to open in April 2008.

When the school was inspected in February 2007, it was judged to require special measures because it was not providing an acceptable standard of education and had not demonstrated the capacity to improve. It was affected by an abnormal turnover of staff. There were particular weaknesses in achievement and standards in English and science, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership and management. The school's progress has been monitored by HMI.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The standard of education has improved significantly and is now satisfactory. There is no inadequate teaching and many lessons are good or, occasionally, outstanding. A strong focus on teaching literacy in a more structured fashion throughout the school has resulted in higher standards in reading. Standards in writing have improved in some classes, but not enough in others, and the school is turning its attention to this area for development. Standards in all subjects remain below average despite the pupils making satisfactory and, increasingly, good progress. Many of the pupils are hampered by their poor speaking and listening and the best teaching in the school tackles these weaknesses alongside other work. Raising standards in mathematics has not been a recent priority and the school is aware that many pupils make only satisfactory progress in this subject, which undermines its ambition to become a good school.

The school has increased the number of lessons for English and, while this is helpful in some respects, it means little emphasis is given to more practical and creative subjects. The school acknowledges that it is not yet doing enough to make the timetable efficient by teaching some literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects. The pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour have improved considerably and their personal development is satisfactory. However, the relative lack of opportunities for practical work strains their powers of concentration.

The school takes very good care of the pupils. Adults deal respectfully with individuals and their families and there is a strong focus on supporting pupils with social or emotional problems, for example through specialist mentors. A review of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has led to a significant improvement in the way programmes of support are tailored to each pupil's needs. The school's very effective development of a robust tracking procedure to record and analyse each pupil's progress has underpinned improvements in many aspects of the school's work. Action quickly follows when pupils are revealed to be underachieving.

Although several of the leadership posts are held on a temporary basis, the school runs smoothly on a day to day basis and has been able to pursue an ambitious strategic plan as well. The local authority made good arrangements to support the inexperienced senior team, which has quickly grown in confidence and effectiveness. The sharing of responsibilities has served to strengthen a collective responsibility for the school's improvement. The school has good capacity to improve because it monitors its performance well, weighs up what needs to be done, and makes clear plans to tackle areas of weakness. Staff, parents and pupils all report that the school has improved. The governing body and acting headteacher are realistic about what has been achieved and are determined that the school will continue its upward trajectory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The manager of the Foundation Unit has exerted a strong influence on improving provision. The unit is well organised and the curriculum is broadly based and stimulating. Planning is exceptionally detailed and based on extensive observations of the children's progress to ensure that activities are relevant to the needs of individuals. Parents are encouraged to work in partnership with the school and more are gaining the confidence to support their children by

working with them in the unit and at home. A relentless focus on developing the teaching of reading and writing is beginning to pay off in higher standards. The children make good progress across all the areas of learning, usually from a very low base. Consequently, despite significant improvements, standards at the end of the Reception Year remain below average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by developing more precise schemes of work and by providing systematic opportunities for all pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Improve standards in mathematics by ensuring that more pupils make good progress.
- Review the curriculum so that more links are made between subjects and greater time is given to practical and creative work.

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

Standards are below average, but improving, and achievement is satisfactory overall, with an increasing number of pupils making good progress, especially at the end of both key stages. The 2007 national test results rose substantially at Key Stage 2, most markedly in English where attainment was only a little below average. Most pupils made significant gains in their last year at school, but attainment was well below average in mathematics, as it was in science despite the school's results being their best ever in this subject. Standards in the current Year 6 look set to continue this improvement, with around three quarters of the pupils on track to reach or exceed the expected Level 4. At Key Stage 1, the 2007 test results remained exceptionally low despite a small improvement in science. The results in reading and mathematics were broadly similar to the previous year's, but there was a sharp decline in writing. The pupils are now making satisfactory progress and standards in the current Year 2 are higher, although still well below average.

The school has had most success with reading because of its clearly structured focus on this area. It is now turning its attention to writing, where the pupils' progress varies more widely across the school. The pupils' ability to make rapid gains in this and other areas of the curriculum is often hampered by poor speaking and listening skills.

Overall, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils, but they often make good progress when taught in small groups concentrating on a tightly focused programme of skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils' all round development is satisfactory and their understanding of right and wrong is a relative strength. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and know that the adults around them will look after them. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and respond positively to incentives to encourage them to eat fresh fruit and vegetables. They take part in a number of physical activities through the week, both within and beyond the curriculum. Attendance at the school is a little below average, but has improved strongly due to robust procedures applied by the school. Similarly, behaviour has improved and is often good. However,

a significant minority are not always self motivated to work hard. Behaviour on the playground is satisfactory. The school council has made some improvements to the school community, such as having gates for the quiet area. The pupils have raised money for charities and sing for the local elderly people. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing the skills they will need to cope effectively with the next stage of their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with many good features and the proportion of good or better teaching is increasing. The school has significantly improved its systems to assess the pupils' progress. The teachers use the information effectively to plan work for groups learning at different rates so that all are enabled to make satisfactory progress. Pupils are consistently encouraged to consider how well they are learning and to know their targets so that they understand how to improve their work. Marking is good and provides guidance as well as encouragement. Where teaching is only satisfactory, pupils are sometimes required to sit still for too long, so they lose concentration because the pace of learning is not sufficiently varied or brisk. However, all lessons are well structured around learning objectives and particular attention is paid to supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well and most classrooms are well presented and stimulating. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the success of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school makes adequate provision for subjects of the National Curriculum, but the timetable has an overemphasis on literacy, with too few opportunities for first hand practical experience. In addition, the school's planning makes few links between different subjects so skills common to a number of subjects are not always taught efficiently. The school has addressed weaknesses in science so that there is clear guidance for teachers on planning work to build on previous learning. Resources for the subject have been improved to ensure that practical work can be undertaken. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. Opportunities for speaking and listening have been introduced successfully, but the school knows there is more work to be done here, especially through more extensive use of drama. The curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, and provision for pupils with more complex needs is good when they have help individually or in small groups. Pupils enjoy various different clubs provided by the school, such as cookery, football and ICT, and the school provides a satisfactory range of local visits and a residential stay for older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are well cared for. Risk assessments are used well to ensure their health and safety, both in school and when pupils are out on school trips. Pupils' medical needs are catered for by staff that have been trained to support pupils. The quality of academic guidance given to pupils is good. They know their targets and what they need to do to make better progress. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Staff are available to talk with pupils who have particular problems and good provision is made to support them through focused

sessions with a learning mentor. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good due to effective management. Their particular needs are identified early and appropriate support is provided and regularly evaluated. Tracking of progress is well organised and effective in spotting whether pupils are making the rate of progress required.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher is well supported by two experienced consultant headteachers who have worked in the school on a part time basis since it went into special measures. Their role has gradually reduced as the acting headteacher has gained in experience, but they continue to play an important part in consolidating improvement. All three individuals have communicated consistently an ambitious vision for the school's future and have established the necessary processes to realise it. Systems for gathering and using assessment data, a programme of monitoring, relevant professional development and regular evaluation and action referenced to a well focused improvement plan have become part of the school's routine. One of the senior team's main priorities was to develop the capacity of all of the school's leaders and managers. The expectation that subject and phase coordinators would quickly develop the confidence and skills to drive developments has been instrumental in securing the school's rapid progress. There is a shared belief in what is required to take the school forward and a clarity about how to achieve success. The sharing of responsibility for the deputy headteacher's role between three senior staff has served to strengthen collective responsibility and works effectively.

The governing body has developed its practice and now has more insight into ways of evaluating the school's progress. The chair of governors has a clear vision for the school's further success based on raising standards and serving the needs of the community. The creation of several committees has increased the number of governors who play a proactive role in supporting and challenging the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

14 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Bromley-Pensnett Primary School, Brierley Hill DY5 4PJ

Thank you for helping the inspection team by telling us what has improved since last year.

We agree with you that the school has achieved a lot since it was last inspected.

- You are reading better and standards of work are improving.
- More of the teaching is really interesting and helps you learn well.
- The school has created a way of checking on your progress so that the teachers quickly know who needs extra help.
- The teachers in charge of the school are clear about what must happen to make your school even better.

The school is so much better than it was that we have decided that it is now satisfactory and no longer needs inspectors to come and check up on it each term. In fact, the work in the Foundation Stage, the way the school looks after you, and the effectiveness of the acting headteacher and her senior staff are all good. To continue improving, we have said that the most important things for the school to concentrate on are:

- helping you to become better writers and more confident speakers
- improving your knowledge of mathematics
- making more time each week for practical subjects such as art and technology. You can help the teachers by coming to school regularly and trying your hardest to concentrate.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely Rob Hubbleday Her Majesty's Inspector

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Yours sincerely



Rob Hubbleday
Her Majesty's Inspector