

Brook Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112231
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378446
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2012
Lead inspector	Ann Ashdown

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrence Fisher
Headteacher	Janet Ditchburn
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown
Angela James

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 7 teachers teaching 12 lessons. In addition, inspectors visited specialist sessions in guided reading, phonics and numeracy and listened to pupils read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information, and other documentation. Inspectors analysed 121 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is an above-average-sized primary school. An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has a higher proportion of boys than average. An above-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average. A much higher proportion of pupils join and leave the school mid-way through the school year than is usually seen. The school meets the current floor standard. It has gained Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has improved since the last inspection. Attainment has risen, pupils' progress has accelerated and their behaviour has improved.
- In this very inclusive school, where pupils speak fourteen different languages, all groups of pupils achieve well. Most children enter the school with skills which are low compared to those typical for their age. They make good progress as they move through the school and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive. Teachers know their pupils well and in most lessons work is closely tailored to their needs. Teachers' clear explanations, good subject knowledge and use of interesting resources all contribute to the good progress that pupils make. The pace of learning is slightly slower in lessons where pupils have fewer opportunities to work on their own, where they do not get the chance to practise their literacy and numeracy skills and when marking is not sufficiently clear for them to be sure about how to improve.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils and their parents and carers say that the school is a safe and friendly place. Most pupils behave well, are sensitive to each other's different cultures and opinions, and are kind and respectful to staff and to visitors. Attendance, although improving, is still below average and the school recognises the need to maintain an unrelenting focus on using all possible strategies to encourage parents and carers to send their children to school regularly.
- The headteacher provides determined leadership. She has a clear vision for further school improvement which is based upon accurate school self-evaluation and is shared by members of the governing body and all staff. Brook Street Primary has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are consistently good or better by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their independent learning skills
 - ensuring marking and feedback are of consistently high quality so pupils are very clear about how to improve their work
 - allowing pupils more opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across all of the subjects and topics they study.

- Continue to use every possible strategy to raise attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are persistent absentees by:
 - working even more closely with parents and carers to ensure they understand the importance of sending their children to school regularly
 - making full use of the expertise available from the local authority and other outside agencies.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons, pupils achieve well. Most concentrate on the task in hand, answer questions readily and are keen to succeed. Of the high proportion of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire the vast majority felt that the school was helping to develop their child's communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills and that their children were making good progress. This is a view with which inspectors concur. Although attainment in reading is below that expected in Year 2, it is broadly average in Year 6. Pupils' good progress was confirmed when inspectors listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read, looked at their reading records and discussed with them the books they enjoyed. Regular guided reading sessions and skilled phonics teaching ensure pupils' literacy skills are developed well. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils developed both their confidence and their understanding of literacy as they acted out the meaning of adverbs, such as 'spookily', 'happily' and 'cheerfully'.

Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully and there is well-targeted, sharply focused and timely extra help for those who need it. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, those who join the school part way through their education and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs all make good progress because they receive skilled intervention in their learning when this is required. For example, pupils who speak English as an additional language made good progress in developing their mathematical skills during a numeracy intervention session due to the teaching assistant's clear explanations and carefully targeted questioning.

Children enter the Nursery with skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy, which are low compared to those typical for their age. They settle quickly

into school routines and make good progress in the stimulating environment provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. Children were enjoying learning outside and developing their numeracy skills as they donned wellingtons, walked in brightly coloured paint and then counted the footprints their boots made on sheets of white paper. This good progress continues through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 so that the gap between the children's skills and the expected levels for their age narrows, and pupils' attainment in the national tests is broadly average when pupils leave Year 6. National data related to pupils' progress, work in pupils' books and that displayed on classroom walls and the school's detailed tracking data all confirm the good and sometimes outstanding progress pupils are making.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the good teaching their children receive and inspection evidence entirely supports this view. Teachers know their pupils well and successfully ensure that their wide ranging needs are met. Lessons are carefully planned and teaching assistants are well deployed to give skilled support, particularly to pupils who speak English as an additional language disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In a literacy session, pupils with special educational needs carefully rehearsed their sentences orally and then wrote them down using correct punctuation. Teachers make good use of praise and reward to raise pupils' self-esteem and increase their confidence. They are clearly motivated by the award of 'You Can Do It' cards for their achievement.

In most lessons work is challenging and the pace of learning is brisk. In a good mathematics lesson, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils confidently used decimals, percentages and fractions and interchanged the use of them as appropriate. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is not as brisk when pupils are asked to listen for too long and have less time to learn independently and find out things for themselves. Books are marked regularly and there are examples of high quality marking where detailed feedback ensures that pupils know how to take the next steps in their learning. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school and in some books marking does not give pupils clear pointers for improvement.

Teachers implement the planned curriculum well and use this to develop pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is a strength of the school. Displays of Indian artefacts, lessons about Native Americans and creative artwork inspired by different cultures all provide an exciting stimulus for pupils' work. However, opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across all curriculum areas are not yet fully developed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Typically, pupils behave well in the playground and around the school. They are considerate of each other's needs and older pupils willingly take responsibility for those younger than themselves. A very small minority of parents and carers were concerned that behaviour disrupted learning in a few lessons. Inspectors investigated these concerns and found that pupils typically behaved well in lessons and any minor incidents of poor behaviour were very well managed by staff. Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school. Parents and carers support this view and several

commented warmly on the good care and support the school gives to children and their families, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The youngest pupils understand that some foods such as fruit are good for them and pictures show how much they enjoyed making and eating fruit kebabs. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying but are confident that any rare incidents of bullying will be quickly sorted out by school staff. The school has a relentless focus on raising attendance and as a result of its efforts attendance has improved this year. However, it is still below average and the number of pupils who are persistent absentees is above average. It is, rightly, a school priority to raise attendance further by continuing to stress to parents and carers the importance of regular attendance and by making full use of all available expertise from outside agencies. Most pupils' punctuality is good.

Leadership and management

The whole staff team, under the very capable leadership of the headteacher, is committed to further school improvement and firmly focused on raising both attainment and attendance. The work of the school is carefully monitored and accurate self-evaluation assists the headteacher in identifying the right priorities for improvement. The tracking of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection, interventions in pupils' learning are better targeted and their impact is carefully monitored. As a result of good professional development, teaching and learning have improved and lessons are more tightly focused on pupils' learning which is checked regularly. On the basis of this track record of improvement, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Members of the governing body are supportive of the school but have yet to become more effectively involved in determining its strategic direction. Together with leaders and managers at all levels, they ensure that all pupils are given good equal opportunities to succeed which contributes to the good progress they make. Any gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils are narrowing rapidly because of the successful intervention in their learning and extra help that the school provides. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Members of the governing body, leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements. Staff are well trained have a clear understanding of child protection issues.

The curriculum is good. It is balanced, reviewed regularly and meets pupils' needs. Work is increasingly being organised to allow for the study of integrated topics and to give pupils more opportunities to practise their basic skills across all areas of the curriculum. However, an appropriate emphasis on the specialist teaching of literacy and numeracy remains. The curriculum is enriched by a range of trips and visits which promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about activities as diverse as visits to museums and churches and rock climbing and ghyll scrambling in the Lake District.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brook Street Primary School, Carlisle, CA1 2JB

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school this week. A particular thank you to those of you who read aloud to us, filled in our questionnaires, talked with us and told us so much about your school. Please thank your parents and carers who also filled in our questionnaires.

This is what we have said about your school in our report.

- Yours is a good school.
- Your achievement is good because you make good progress and reach the same levels of attainment as other children your age by the end of Year 6.
- The youngest children get a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The teaching you receive, the way your school is led and managed and the curriculum you follow are all good.
- Your behaviour is good and you enjoy learning.
- Your school ensures you are kept safe.

This is what we have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Make your lessons even better by:
 - giving you more time to work on your own
 - giving you clear feedback on how to improve your work
 - giving you more opportunities to practise your literacy and numeracy skills across all of the subjects and topics you study.
- Working closely with your parents and carers to make sure you all come to school regularly.

All of you can help your school to become even better by making sure you attend regularly and working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Ashdown
Lead Inspector

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