

Brooklands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121778
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	359081
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Michele Crichton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Wendy Clarke
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Buffett
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. All five staff that were teaching during the two days of inspection were observed. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils and governors. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including that relating to self-evaluation, pupils' progress and safeguarding. She also took into account the views of 23 parents and carers who returned questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective leadership and management is at all levels.
- The extent to which the school ensures teaching and learning are at least consistently good for all pupil groups through to Key Stage 4.
- How robustly the school tracks pupils' progress, analyses data and sets targets.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized special school which caters for pupils with severe, profound and complex needs. Over a quarter have autism spectrum conditions. All have a statement of special educational needs. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very small. Very few children attend the Early Years Foundation Stage. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher of the school was the acting headteacher pending the appointment of a new headteacher.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is an effective school which deserves its good reputation with parents and carers. Typical of their comments is, Brooklands is a wonderful school. The staff are all brilliant and the pupils are happy'.

As a consequence of the pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, attainment is low on entry to school. However, pupils make good progress throughout the school from their individual starting points and achieve well. This is because of good teaching and carefully-tailored learning programmes which are put into place for all pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the sixth form. The good care, guidance and support of pupils are additional strengths of the school where a calm, welcoming and supportive atmosphere prevails. There are good relationships with parents and carers and outstanding partnerships with a wide range of professionals and agencies. Behaviour is good and pupils are accepting and tolerant of each other. Pupils make a positive contribution within the local community, resulting in them growing in confidence and self-esteem.

The school is introducing a comprehensive scheme to track pupils' progress but this is taking time to embed and hence existing procedures are also being used alongside it. This results in an excess of information that is not easily interpreted to give an efficient picture of the progress pupils make and for use in the setting of new challenging targets. In addition, assessment information is not being used to full effect by teachers to guide pupils' future learning.

The school has developed a good curriculum and there have been improvements in the effectiveness of leadership and management since the last inspection. The school has a good capacity to sustain these improvements. This is due to a reorganised and effective leadership team who work well together and play well to each other's professional strengths. Additionally, the strategic use of the school's exceptional partnerships and links with external agencies underpin this capacity to improve learning experiences for pupils. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and takes action accordingly to make improvements. As a result, provision is improving and outcomes for pupils are good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the use of efficient assessment and pupil progress procedures from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4 by:
 - securing an effective and robust system to track pupils' progress

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- ensuring leaders and managers at all levels are able to interpret the information regarding pupil progress and set new, challenging targets effectively
- ensuring teachers use the information gained from assessments to inform their lesson planning and pupils' future learning consistently
- developing the skills of the governing body so that it can check accurately on the work of school leaders in monitoring school performance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons pupils enjoy their learning and want to learn and succeed. This is because the pace of lessons is appropriate to their needs: work is made fun and enjoyable; learning activities are interesting and pupils receive immediate feedback to encourage future participation. Consequently, pupils make good progress regardless of the nature of their special educational needs and/or disabilities and there is no significant difference between the progress made by different groups of pupils. Pupils say they are happy to come to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Behaviour is good. Any challenging behaviour is dealt with calmly by staff. This ensures that other pupils in the group do not themselves become agitated or disturbed.

Pupils' understanding and participation in a wide range of activities relating to the adoption of healthy lifestyles are good. They are involved well in a good range of activities including yoga, cookery sessions and rebound therapy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community, for example through the many fund-raising and charity events that are held. These include holding coffee mornings where refreshments are made and sold or in bulb-planting schemes in the town. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well. This is achieved, for example, through a variety of visits to places of worship and residential excursions where all pupils have the opportunity to participate. Additionally, a good range of resources, including music and stories from other cultures, adds variety and diversity to their experiences. Pupils' above-average attendance contributes significantly to them being well-prepared for future economic well-being.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and support staff are highly effective in implementing their extensive knowledge about developing learning. Staff ensure activities are fun but relevant to the individual. For example, sensory experiences such as exploring jelly in a variety of forms extends individual taste and touch preferences. The promotion of communication, the use of interesting resources and ensuring every pupil contributes to the best of their ability are constant features of all lessons. Teachers regularly monitor and assess pupils' progress. However, this assessment information is not always used or recorded consistently in teacher's planning other than in the sixth form. Nor is it sufficiently used to inform future learning and outcomes.

Staff's ability to provide meaningful learning opportunities to pupils has contributed to the good developments made to the curriculum since the last inspection. The curriculum is well-organised, personal to the individual and is imaginatively enhanced by interesting resources and activities, many of which are away from the classroom. For example, pupils enjoy continuing their learning during swimming sessions or at a local donkey sanctuary. This is achieved by Brooklands staff working collaboratively with other partners to ensure pupil learning programmes are followed through all activities. For example, learning such as counting and shape recognition is monitored, as is behaviour, balance and physical

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coordination. Residential visits, for example to Kielder Water in Northumberland, promote pupils' enjoyment as well as their social and independence skills.

Good relationships between adults and pupils underpin the school's good provision for the care, guidance and support of its pupils. This is reflected in the positive and supportive ethos that permeates the whole of the school. Excellent links with partner institutions and specialist agencies, particularly in relation to meeting pupils' medical needs, play a significant role in this aspect of its work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The committed school leadership team work together well to ensure positive outcomes for pupils. Good capacity is further drawn from their excellent partnerships, for example, with other special schools and partners in the locality and beyond. The effectiveness of the governing body is currently satisfactory but is improving quickly. Although governors are not yet fully involved in evaluating the school and holding school leaders to account for its performance, they are increasingly doing so and their work contributes well to the school's robust and rigorous procedures that ensure safeguarding is good.

The promotion of equal opportunities is good. Its effectiveness is evident in the fact that no group of pupils is making significantly different progress from that of any other and that there is no evidence of discrimination. The promotion of community cohesion is particularly good within the school itself and its locality and the school has plans to develop links beyond its local community. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and this is reflected in the very positive responses to the questionnaires circulated prior to the inspection.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Leadership and management are good. This is demonstrated, for example, in the resourceful and imaginative classroom management and organisation that takes place. Due to the unpredictable numbers of children that can start at this stage, leaders creatively include different groups of pupils to ensure a learning environment that is stimulating, interesting and appropriate to individual needs. The personalised programmes of learning that are present throughout the school are also employed here and show the good progress that is made by learners. Although there is good teaching and learning, there are some inconsistencies in the recording of and the use of assessment information.

The good relationships with parents and extremely effective links with other agencies and partners ensure good care and support for children. For example, very close working with a range of agencies ensures that children's medical needs are very personally and attentively met. All welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met well and there is good provision for learners both inside the classroom and outdoors. For example, a good lesson was observed in the sensory room showing how children's understanding of light and dark, cause and effect and prediction skills were developed. It also demonstrated the skilful weaving of making learning fun, stimulating and meaningful to children through play and exploration.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

The sixth-form learning environment promotes an ethos of independence through active participation in learning. There are high expectations of students. These are consistently relevant and appropriate to the needs, interests and capabilities of the individual. Staff work well collectively and creatively to ensure good provision. Through good teaching and an interesting and relevant curriculum, students make good progress and develop a wide range of skills. The highly-effective partnerships the school has developed are again utilised well to ensure good opportunities for students. For example, links with the voluntary sector and local businesses mean that work experience can be completed hourly over a six- to eight-week period if this is more appropriate to the needs of the student.

Good leadership and management assure positive outcomes for students, ensuring that all who leave gain some form of accredited qualification. Safeguarding, care, guidance and support are consistent with those in the main school. Assessment procedures and tracking systems are robust and efficient and this information is used well to enhance future learning. Behaviour is positive and students openly support and help each other, frequently without any prompting.

The deficits to the sixth-form accommodation that were noted at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. A renovated and converted bungalow in the school's grounds is now a self-contained sixth-form unit with a fully-equipped kitchen and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. This good provision enables students to develop enterprise and social skills and crucially their independence and confidence for the next stage of learning and life.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires were very positive about the quality of education that is provided for their children. They commented especially on how much their children enjoyed coming to school, that the school kept their children safe and how good teaching was supporting their children's good progress. Inspection findings endorse these views. A very small number of parents were concerned about the level of learning and progress that their children made. The evidence of inspection points to progress being good. About half of all parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, about average for a school of this type.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brooklands School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 43 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	83	3	13	1	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	52	11	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	61	6	26	2	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	70	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	48	10	43	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	61	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	61	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	61	6	26	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	52	10	43	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



17 January 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Brooklands School, Skipton, BD23 2DB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. It was clear from the chats we had that you enjoy coming to school and that you are learning well. It was also clear from the responses from your parents and carers, in discussion and in their questionnaires, that they are happy with the progress you are making and think you are safe and well cared for.

Brooklands is a good school but it can become even better. To help make this happen, I have asked your teachers and other adults to make sure that the system they use to check on your learning works really well so that they can set you challenging targets. Also, to use the information they gain about your progress to help you to do even better in your work.

I know that you will do all you can to help your teachers. I must also thank you for making me lunch. The chicken soup was tasty and as a 'special treat', the chocolate cake (with sauce and ice-cream), was fantastic.

Yours sincerely

Michele Crichton

Lead inspector

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