

Brewster Avenue Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110722
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	356803
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Green
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Smith
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
School address	Brewster Avenue Woodston, Peterborough PE2 9PN
Telephone number	01733 565092
Fax number	01733 565092
Email address	office@bravemail.co.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by nine members of staff in the seven classes in school. Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: the tracking of pupils' progress, school improvement planning, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body's meetings and samples of pupils' recent work. They also scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaires from 37 parents and 20 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether all groups of pupils and particularly the White British boys achieve well enough, especially in writing
- if pupils have positive attitudes to their work and whether attendance is improving
- if staff use the range of assessment information to provide challenging work for different groups of pupils
- whether the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school is rigorous and accurately identifies areas for further improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized Infant and Nursery school in Peterborough. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups, mainly of Eastern European and Asian heritage and who speak English as an additional language, is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. However, there is a higher proportion of pupils on the autistic spectrum than in many schools. The school holds Health Promoting School status and a Clean Air award. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in a Nursery and two Reception classes. A new headteacher and acting assistant headteachers took up their posts in September.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but the pace of progress declines in Years 1 and 2. Observations in lessons and samples of recent work show that pupils do not make consistent gains in their learning and for too many, especially those of average and higher abilities, progress is inadequate. Data from teachers' assessments show that standards fell in 2009 and were below average. While there was improvement in some areas this year the boys did much less well than the girls and worse than boys nationally. For example, fewer than half the number of boys than girls reached upper end of the expected level in their writing and there were significant differences in reading and mathematics. Relatively few pupils reach the higher levels in their work. Progress is very variable from class to class and many pupils from different ethnic groups do not achieve all they are capable of. This does not help them prepare well enough for their future and overall achievement is inadequate.

The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory as is their behaviour. Pupils say they like coming to school and parents are generally happy with what is provided. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe and to develop a healthy lifestyle. Safeguarding procedures are inadequate; as a result, the care, guidance and support of pupils are also inadequate. The support for those who are potentially vulnerable, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those on the autistic spectrum, is effective. This enables pupils with additional needs to make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

The quality of teaching and learning and of the curriculum is not consistently effective and inadequate overall. The planning of many activities is weak and does not identify exactly what pupils should learn. Staff do not use assessment information well enough to set work that challenges all groups. Curriculum planning does not provide a good enough balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities for many pupils, including in Year 1. Therefore, the skills the pupils need to do well in the future are not taught in a systematic and consistent manner.

The governing body recognised the weaknesses in provision highlighted in a local authority review earlier this year and a new headteacher and acting assistant headteachers were appointed. The headteacher has a good grasp of what works well and where improvement is required. A good start has been made to improving school self-evaluation which, until recently, has been poor. The assistant headteachers have time

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allocated to monitor provision in specific areas. While there have been numerous changes, many are at a very early stage; they are not embedded and have, therefore, not yet made a significant impact. There are still too many weaknesses in teaching and learning and, consequently, the school does not yet have the capacity for sustained improvement. Nevertheless, staff are already expressing their growing confidence and note 'in the last three weeks our school has moved on and lots of changes made for the good of us all - staff, children and parents'. The governing body is supportive of the school and worked diligently to address several areas of concern. However, it does not check carefully enough that it is meeting its statutory responsibilities, including those related to safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils are kept safe at all times by regularly checking that relevant policies, strategies and procedures are up to date.
- Raise the achievement of all pupils and especially the boys by:
 - improving the proportion reaching at least the levels expected for their age, particularly in writing
 - ensuring that pupils of average and higher ability reach the levels that they are capable of.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum planning by:
 - making full use of assessment information to set tasks that consistently challenge groups of different abilities
 - ensuring that the planning of lessons clearly identifies exactly what pupils are to learn in specific activities.
- Improve school self-evaluation procedures by:
 - making better use of the tracking of pupils' progress to identify exactly where improvement needs to be made
 - ensuring that the quality of planning, teaching and learning is regularly monitored and rigorously evaluated to identify areas for improvement
 - extending the role of the governing body in fulfilling the statutory duties placed upon them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are a little below the expectations for their age especially in their ability to communicate with others. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and it is good in some areas. Therefore, when they enter Year 1 the skills, knowledge and understanding of many pupils are in line with national expectations. In Years 1 and 2 the progress pupils make is very variable and overall they do not achieve well enough. Progress is best in some lessons in Year 2 where through the direct teaching of specific skills pupils learn more, for instance about writing sentences correctly, and improving their use of punctuation. However, progress is more limited in other lessons including in Year 1 where at times several pupils simply run around in the outside area and do little to improve their

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knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils of average and higher ability do not make sufficient progress. Data and lesson observations show that boys in particular do not achieve well because they are not challenged consistently in their work. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they have well targeted support.

Pupils like school and get on well together. Behaviour is at least satisfactory and sometimes good, but several pupils lose concentration when listening to an adult and do not try particularly hard with their work. Most pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe including when moving around in very crowded play areas. They understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle, but there is more to be done to convince many of the benefits of healthy packed lunches. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, relevant to their age, including as members of the school council and as reading helpers. Attendance is close to the national average and there has been a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with opportunities to think about others and learn more about different cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

How effective is the provision?

While the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is inadequate overall, there are examples of satisfactory and at times good teaching. However, teaching is not always effective enough to help fill the gaps in pupils' learning. The key weakness is that the

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planning of activities is limited and not enough is expected of many pupils. This is seen, for example, in Year 2, where pupils do not make enough progress in drawing around shapes because there is not enough emphasis on naming the shapes and recognising their properties. It is often not clear exactly what pupils are to learn in any given activity and there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas. The school has tried hard to extend the curriculum through opportunities for pupils to make choices in their learning, but this has been to the detriment of having sufficient and focused activities led by adults. Occasionally, staff do little more than supervise the pupils' behaviour rather than leading learning. Therefore, the key skills, for instance of how to write in more depth and detail and with accurate spelling and sentence construction, are not developed in a consistent manner. While the school has a reasonable range of assessment information, it is not used well enough to plan challenging activities for groups of different abilities. This has an adverse impact particularly on the achievement of the average and more-able pupils. Because staff do not use data to track the progress of specific groups such as boys, pupils sometimes make little or no progress in some key areas and occasionally regress. The pastoral care of pupils and their families has several effective elements including the work with a number of external agencies and the adjoining Children's Centre. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to guide pupils about how to improve their work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff are unanimous in their appreciation of the start made by the new headteacher and one notes, 'this is an exciting time for our school. The headteacher has been inspirational and has already made an impact in the short time in post'. Inspectors agree that a very positive start has been made to address some long-standing weaknesses in school self-evaluation. These were identified in a local authority audit earlier this year and difficult decisions were made by the governing body, which recognised the urgent need to improve provision. The governing body takes its responsibilities seriously and when issues, including some aspects of safeguarding, are identified they are acted upon immediately. However, the checks on policies and procedures and the recording of information of those who work in school do not always meet requirements.

The links the school has with parents and a wide range of agencies are at least satisfactory and have some good elements. This is well illustrated in the extensive range of home visits prior to children starting in the Nursery and with other pre-school groups including the Children's Centre. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is also satisfactory through links with the local community and international aspects to the curriculum including the teaching of Italian. However, the

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school does not promote equality of opportunity well enough because it does not ensure that all groups of pupils are well catered for and reach their potential.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory and with strengths in the enthusiasm and commitment of the new staff team to make further improvements. This is reflected in the recent updating of resources which are good and with attractive outdoor environments that stimulate learning. Skills in speaking and listening are a little below average and several children, from the range of ethnic groups have quite a limited English vocabulary. Some are very new to learning English as an additional language. While the planning of activities is satisfactory staff do not have the balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities quite right. It is not always clear enough exactly what the children are to learn and at times more could be expected of them. There is a good number of adult helpers and pupils are well cared for which enables them to settle quickly and happily. Staff observe the children carefully and make a sound start to compiling and using a range of assessment information to move learning on. Therefore, the outcomes for children are satisfactory and some children make good progress including in their personal and social development. However, staff, both teaching and in support roles, sometimes miss the opportunity to focus on the development of a more mature vocabulary and develop early mark-making and writing skills further.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Those who did are happy with their children's experiences at the school and are confident that they enjoy their time at Brewster Avenue. Several echo the views of one who notes 'we have been pleased with the improvements made by the new headteacher and look forward to future developments'. While most parents think their children are kept safe in school, they have concerns about some aspects of safeguarding which inspectors brought to the attention of the school. This had been previously recognised but not acted upon well enough. However, during the inspection immediate action was taken to start to address these concerns. Some parents would like further information about the progress their child is making and how they can support them at home. A few would like the staff to listen more to their concerns. The school has recognised such issues and has made a start on ensuring communication with parents is more regular and informative.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brewster Avenue Infant 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 inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	73	10	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	46	17	46	1	3	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	32	17	46	4	11	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	41	16	43	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	15	41	18	49	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	32	20	54	3	8	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	22	27	73	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)	11	30	21	57	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	30	20	54	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	22	22	59	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	32	18	49	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	38	14	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	57	15	41	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



30 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brewster Avenue Infant School, Peterborough, PE2 9PN

Thank you very much for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your

- school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, including the group we met who were good at explaining what you all do. We also liked meeting you in lessons, at lunchtimes and when we attended assemblies. I particularly enjoyed seeing some of you playing outside especially those in the Nursery who were enjoying digging in the garden area. We were pleased to see that most of you behave well and that those of you who find learning difficult are given a lot of help. These are some of our findings from the visit.

We don't think your school is doing as well as it could at the moment. We have decided to put your school into what is called 'special measures' because you are not learning as much as you should. Other inspectors will visit soon to see how quickly things are getting better.

To improve your school, we have asked the headteacher, the staff and the governors to:

- make sure that they check more carefully all the things that keep you safe
- help you to improve your work and especially your writing so that all of you, especially the boys and those who find learning fairly easy, make more progress
- improve how the staff plan what you do so that your work is better organised and a bit harder for you
- make sure that everyone checks really carefully what is happening and that they know what else needs to be improved and how to do this.

To help your school more, some of you might all try a little bit harder with your work and make sure you join in discussions.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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