

Brookside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123007
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359343
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Brown
Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Cornell
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 20 lessons with 10 teachers being seen. Meetings were held with the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 80 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The progress made by all groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities at Key Stage 1, to see if the improving trend in progress and achievement is being sustained across all classes.
- The success of the school's strategies to boost attendance.
- The features of assessment for learning that are helping to boost pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in sustaining improvements, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement and progress.

Information about the school

This is an average sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from different minority ethnic groups. A few are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. These pupils' needs cover a wide range including moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social problems, and difficulties with speech, language and communication. The school has achieved the Activemark and Healthy School status. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Foundation Stage Unit. There is a breakfast club managed by the governing body.

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 a good school where pupils make good progress and achieve well. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree. One parent or carer, representing the views of many, commented, 'We are very pleased with our children's progress not only educationally but socially as well. They enjoy school and look forward to coming each day.' Another added that, 'We are very happy with the high level of education and care our child receives.'

Significant improvement has been made to a number of areas of the school's provision since the last inspection including the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and leadership and management. This means the school is now dismantling the barriers to learning with skill and determination and pupils are achieving well. Together with the clear leadership of the headteacher and governing body and the enthusiasm and commitment of staff, this indicates that the school has good capacity to improve even further.

Attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 6. A detailed analysis of the performance data for different groups of pupils and a scrutiny of their work show they make good progress from their starting points at the school and achieve well. This means the school has successfully ironed out inconsistencies in the progress from year to year. Pupils who have moderate and other learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making good progress against their targets. This, too, is better than at the time of the last inspection.

These successes are underpinned by improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are much better at ensuring that work is well matched to the different abilities within the classes. This ensures that pupils make good progress and enjoy their learning. In a good number of lessons the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be outstanding and pupils were making rapid progress. However, in some classes it is still satisfactory because day-to-day assessment is not used well enough to plan work that ensures all groups, particularly the higher attainers, are sufficiently challenged. This means pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.

Pupils are extremely well cared for and feel secure and happy. As a consequence, they enjoy coming to school, attend regularly and behave well. The school's strong emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles, recognised in its national awards, ensures that pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Pupils find the targets they are given and the opportunities for self-assessment provide them with something to aim for and help them gauge how well they are doing. The well-organised breakfast club provides a good start to the school day and adds much to the children's enjoyment of school. The school has been particularly successful at raising the rate of attendance from its previously low levels. Attendance is now satisfactory and continues to improve rapidly.

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The good curriculum provides opportunities for all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to progress and develop well. It is exemplary in promoting the arts and pupils' personal and social development. The school draws on the expertise of outside agencies extremely well to support this work. However, the quality of outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 does not yet match the high quality indoor provision. This means the range of activities outdoors does not yet offer children the same inspirational opportunities to practise and develop their skills and explore independently.

Good leadership and management overall have established a very caring environment where equality and diversity are valued and celebrated. This has been underpinned by the headteacher's outstanding commitment to driving improvements, ably supported by his senior managers, and good leadership at all other levels. The school has successfully reached out to the community and raised parents' expectations of what their children can achieve. The governing body is making a good contribution to the strategic management of the school by acting as an effective critical friend. The school improvement plan is based upon effective school evaluation and uses challenging targets well to accelerate the achievement for all groups of pupils

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to match the high quality indoor provision.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is uniformly good or better, by raising the quality of learning in the small proportion of satisfactory lessons through providing consistently high levels of pace and challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Since the last inspection, the school has been successful at addressing underachievement and in raising attainment, especially for boys, and closing the gap between reading and writing. Pupils' attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 6 from levels that are generally lower than expected for the age group at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils now make consistently good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very positive about their learning and make similar progress as their peers. The very few pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English also make good progress and achieve well. Pupils' good basic skills and positive attitudes to learning mean that they are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Pupils thoughtfully and willingly contribute their ideas and are keen to answer their teachers' questions. They respond well to challenges and cooperate very effectively in pairs or groups when asked to do so. For example, pupils in Years 4/5 enjoyed the challenge of finding ways of insulating against sound. They shared their ideas, responded well to their teacher's high expectations of work and behaviour and were fully involved in the activities. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson, pupils were fully involved in a writing activity and were able to respond to the teacher's questions with enthusiasm and confidence because the work was extremely well matched to the different abilities within the class. The pupils produced some thought-provoking persuasive writing linked to the

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history topic on Victorian inventions. Occasionally, pupils' enthusiasm wanes a little when they are not sufficiently stimulated or challenged by the work they are asked to do.

In their responses to the questionnaires every pupil said that they feel extremely safe in school and they have great confidence in the adults around them. Most pupils adopt very active lifestyles and have an excellent understanding of the importance of a balanced diet in keeping healthy. Pupils take their many responsibilities around the school very seriously. They feel that their ideas are taken seriously through the activities of the school council. The pupils also make an excellent contribution to the local community through, for example, the Bicester School Council where they examine issues affecting the community and suggest ways of improving the town.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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

How effective is the provision?

While teaching is good overall, there is an increasing amount of outstanding practice and some that is satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers use a variety of strategies, including the use of information and communication technology, to enthuse and motivate learners. For example, in a reading lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils were learning a new sound and using it to make new words which they displayed on the interactive whiteboard. In a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils enjoyed using their previous knowledge and skills to solve number problems. They evaluated their performance and provided perceptive feedback to one another. Teachers generally use their assessment of pupils'

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progress well to meet their different needs effectively, although, occasionally, the pace of learning is too slow and tasks are not sufficiently demanding of all pupils, particularly the most able. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and supportively.

Interesting themes and projects capture the imagination of pupils and they are excited, enthusiastic learners. The curriculum is exemplary in promoting the arts and pupils' personal and social development. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in educational visits and to work in partnership with other local schools. They are proud of their sporting achievements and their contribution to the local 'Better Bicester' project. There are good examples of the use of the outdoor environment to enhance pupils' learning, for example through den building, gardening and creating an outdoor art gallery. However, more can be done to raise the quality of outdoor learning in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage to the high quality indoor curriculum delivered for the youngest children.

The school takes excellent care of pupils. Adults place pupils' well-being at the centre of their work and this makes the school a happy place to be. There are excellent partnerships with outside agencies to get additional support when it is needed and skilled teaching assistants also make a very valuable contribution to the learning of pupils who need extra help with their work. The school works extremely well with parents, volunteers and a variety of external agencies to support those children most at risk.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong impact of leadership is seen in how effectively the headteacher and his senior management team are embedding ambition and driving improvement. They are clearly focused on raising pupils' achievement and promoting high standards of care. The school's pursuit for improvement is well managed. As a result, the legacy of underachievement is being eliminated and pupils achieve well. The senior managers have established an accurate view of what needs to be done to build on existing strengths. This is reflected in the school's coherent plans for improvement.

The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are of excellent quality and that all statutory requirements, including child protection and risk assessment, are regularly reviewed and approved. It is well established and has a very good understanding of the school and the community it serves. It takes a strategic view of the school's development and is well aware of potential challenges. It holds the school to account well and ensures that statutory duties are met.

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The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A clear plan is in place for promoting pupils' understanding from local, national and global perspectives. While links with contrasting communities within the United Kingdom are at an earlier stage of development, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the global community are developing well.

The school is active and effective in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well. It is addressing this with some success. For example, the gap between the performance of boys and girls is narrowing although there is still more to do.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	1
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

Consistently good teaching means that children achieve well from their overall below expected starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children settle quickly and benefit from well-structured routines and organisation that help them to feel safe, secure and excited to come to school. They have very positive attitudes to learning because staff have a very good knowledge of the needs of the age range and plan highly motivational activities matched to children's stages of development and interests. There is a very good balance of child and adult led activities across the areas of learning which promote independence, investigation and communication skills. Strong leadership enables staff to work as a cohesive team and the quality of learning is consistently good. Examples of exemplary teaching are beginning to raise the quality of provision even higher. Children were thrilled to see themselves and their teacher in their video of 'The Gingerbread Man' and went on to independently construct number lines, act out story parts, paint and draw pictures and mark make. The development of oral communication skills is prioritised and children listen attentively and make good progress in responding to questions and sharing ideas.

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Children learn happily in the outdoor environment but this aspect of provision is not yet as well developed as the indoor environment. The range of activities and organisation of space do not yet offer children the same inspirational opportunities to practise and develop their skills and explore independently. This aspect is a priority in the action plan.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning to speak English are identified from the earliest stage possible and supported effectively. Consequently, all groups of children achieve well. Regular observations and assessments are made in each aspect of learning and children's learning journeys provide useful records of progress. Tracking shows development over time is good and children from all backgrounds flourish in the caring environment. Behaviour is consistently good and children trust the adults who support them.

Leadership and management are strong. The quality of provision is good and improving rapidly as staff strive to accelerate progress and achieve the priorities in the action plan. As a result, children make good progress and all groups achieve well.

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

Views of parents and carers

About a third of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. They were overwhelmingly positive about the school. All reported that their children are happy at school and that they are pleased with their children's overall experience at Brookside. The majority of responses indicated that parents and carers strongly agreed with these aspects. Where they added comments they tended to commend the staff and the level of care and more generally reported their overall level of happiness with the school. A few parents and carers do not think that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour was good and that all of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt safe and secure and were happy that adults deal quickly with any concerns they might have.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brookside Primary 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 252 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	70	24	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	70	23	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	55	30	38	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	54	31	39	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	65	27	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	58	30	38	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	45	41	51	2	3	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)	25	31	49	61	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	46	35	44	6	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	35	39	49	10	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	34	45	56	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	48	36	45	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	55	31	39	4	5	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.



21 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookside Primary School, Bicester OX26 2DB

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed with your friendliness and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other. We believe, like you, that you go to a good school. We also feel that some areas of your school are outstanding. This means that it does some things very well indeed especially the care, guidance and support you receive.

You behave well, which means that your teachers can get on with teaching you new and interesting things without the distraction of any misbehaviour. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your work and were impressed with your enthusiasm for school. The teaching in your school is good and often better, and it means that, together with your positive attitudes to work, you make good progress and attain standards that are above the national average.

The adults are always looking at ways to improve your learning. To make it even better, we are asking your teachers to make sure that the work they give you to do is always hard enough, especially for some of you who find learning a bit easier. We have also asked them to make sure that the opportunities for learning outdoors in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are as interesting and challenging as those in the classroom.

We know that you will continue to work hard and we are sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better.

We hope that you have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Earish

Lead inspector

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