

Brunel Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131248
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	360240
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maria Ashurst
Headteacher	Peter Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
School address	Callington Road Saltash PL12 6DX
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Age group	2–11
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Inspection number	360240

Number of children on roll in the registered

childcare provision

Date of last inspection of registered

childcare provision

Not previously inspected

Age group 2–11

Inspection dates 24–25 November 2010

Inspection number 360240

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with staff, governors and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to pupils' attainment and progress and to monitoring, evaluation and development planning. The responses to questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 94 parents and carers were analysed. The team also inspected the registered childcare managed by the governing body.

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

- Pupils' attainment and progress in English, especially that of boys and those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which the provision enables pupils to lead safe and healthy lives, to attend and behave well and contribute to the community.
- The quality and impact of monitoring, evaluation and strategic planning on pupils' progress.
- The quality and impact of subject leadership.
- The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, including that of the pre-school, in developing early communication and social skills.

Information about the school

The school serves a small coastal town, with some pupils coming from a wider area. A very large majority of pupils are of White British ethnicity. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These range from moderate learning or behavioural difficulties to more profound disabilities.

In 2009 the governing body took management responsibility for a pre-school located on the site. Also located on the site are a children's centre and a nurture group to which the local authority allocates pupils from other schools who are experiencing behavioural difficulties. Situated alongside the school are a health centre, leisure centre, public library and other public services.

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, as it was at its last inspection in 2008. However, since that inspection, several important aspects of the school have shown significant improvement and are now outstanding. The governing body's decision to take on the management of the pre-school has enabled the school to make a continuum of provision for children aged from two onwards. Although this is a relatively recent development, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are already making improved progress due to excellent teaching and a vibrant and stimulating indoor and outdoor environment. They enter Year 1 well prepared for more formal education. All pupils feel very safe in school, behave well and have an excellent understanding for their ages of personal safety and of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. They make an outstanding contribution to the community, both within school, as members of the school council for example, and in the wider community through long term projects such as raising money to fund a school in Africa.

These strengths in pupils' personal development are a reflection of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. The school is an inclusive establishment that encourages pupils to reflect on their own and others' circumstances and experiences. This approach is enhanced by the school's outstanding partnerships with, among others, the nurture unit and children's centre on the site and with others both locally and from wider afield. There are also excellent relationships with parents and carers who are almost universal in their praise of the school. These features lead to outstanding promotion of community cohesion and a climate in which equality of opportunity is very strongly promoted and potential discrimination is not tolerated. A relative weakness is in pupils' attendance which, in spite of the school's best efforts, is improving too slowly and remains average.

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6 and their attainment in English and mathematics is average, representing good progress. Improvements in attainment have been more erratic in English than in mathematics, but the school has identified relative weaknesses, such as in the progress of some boys, and has put in place successful strategies to rectify them. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good, with particularly good use of day-to-day assessment to show pupils how to improve their work, and very effective use of teaching assistants. The planning of lessons to fully meet the needs of all pupils is less consistently good and the use of information and communication technology as a learning tool for pupils, while very good in some classes, is also variable. The curriculum is being developed further and a new approach emphasising worldwide issues and challenges is accelerating pupils' progress, but is as yet more effective in some classes than others.

Under the leadership of the experienced and reflective headteacher and knowledgeable members of the governing body, the school is responding well to the issues it has correctly identified through effective self-evaluation. For example, there has been a quick

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response to a sudden unexpected influx of new pupils in the appointment of an additional teacher. This is clearly an improving school that has a good capacity to make continued progress and which is rightly aiming to achieve overall excellence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all lessons are planned to maximise pupils' progress by:
 - focusing on the things that pupils are expected to learn as a result of the teaching that takes place
 - using assessment more consistently to identify the learning needs of each pupil
 - reflecting the best practice that already exists in the school.
- Strengthen existing strategies to improve attendance by providing some parents and carers with more effective guidance on the impact of low attendance on their children's learning and development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and in mathematics at the end of Year 6, has risen steadily since the last inspection. For example, pupils in Year 3 confidently manipulated and interpreted data presented in tables, graphs and charts. In English, improvement has been more patchy with some boys, especially those with moderate learning difficulties, making slower progress. However, the school recognised this and gave extra support to these pupils and there is good evidence that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now making equally good progress in all subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 worked well in ability-based groups studying the science of light. Those of average or above average attainment successfully designed their own experiments under the guidance of the teacher and her assistants, while the lower attaining pupils made good progress because of patient and sensitive intervention by another teaching assistant. Pupils' writing also shows good progress from year to year, with Year 6 pupils producing well-written, thoughtful and accurate work. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, although limited access to resources restricts the development of information and communication technology skills for some, mainly younger, pupils.

Pupils behave and care for each other well. There is occasional restlessness in the few lessons where the teaching does not fully meet their needs, but inspectors saw no other examples of poor behaviour. Pupils are aware of potential danger, for instance by ensuring that visitors are wearing an official badge, yet they also assess risk in their energetic exercise and play. The school council takes its work seriously. Its members act as a listening ear for pupils with problems. While the great majority of pupils attend well, a few parents and carers do not always recognise the importance of getting their children to school every day and on time.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	3
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	1

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?

Teachers use an exciting range of strategies to motivate and interest pupils, such as by dressing as Cleopatra to introduce work on Ancient Egypt, or using a mirrored box that appears to make an object float in the air when studying the behaviour of light. These are examples of the good developments taking place in strengthening the curriculum, which is focused on developing pupils' understanding of the world, its people and cultures, and which is enhanced by a good range of additional activities such as clubs and visits. A further strength is the very astute use of the skilful teaching assistants, who are especially skilled in the use of questioning and in encouraging pupils to discuss sensitive issues. In most respects, teachers also use assessment very well, for example to set targets which pupils have in front of them as they work. The use of assessment to plan work that fully meets the needs of all is more variable, as is ensuring that pupils are clear about what they have learned from each lesson. However, in the best lessons all these features are developed very well, and the identification of the learning needs of those making slower progress and the use of strategies to improve their progress is effective across the school.

The good work of teaching assistants is an example of the excellent care, guidance and support that pupils receive. Great attention is given to support for pupils and families experiencing difficulties, and a wide range of expertise is drawn on to enable this to be of the highest quality. The expertise provided by the children's centre and nurture group

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leader is particularly valuable in this respect. This high level of care starts in the pre-school and continues throughout the school.

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 headteacher, staff and members of the governing body share a strong ambition for the school to be an inclusive establishment which provides the best possible education for pupils. It rightly includes their families as an essential part of that process, and takes a lead in coordinating its efforts with the onsite children's centre and other nearby agencies in order to achieve success. The governing body is effective in monitoring the school's work and subject leaders are having a good impact on raising pupils' attainment. The excellent leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the bold decision of the governing body to manage the pre-school have contributed to children receiving the best possible start to their education. Other middle leaders have, through astute monitoring and identification of pupils' needs, strengthened teaching and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

All requirements to keep children safe are in place, with high quality policies that are monitored effectively. Minor updates needed to some documentation were quickly carried out when inspectors drew them to the school's attention. As already stated, the school's work concerning equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting community cohesion are outstanding, and pupils demonstrate a high level of empathy and understanding towards those of different backgrounds or abilities.

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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	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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Within twenty minutes of an early fall of snow, some children were playing in it outdoors, others were painting snow scenes and yet more were in animated conversation with staff and each other about temperature and weather. Resources, from wellingtons to white paint, appeared as if by magic. This was an example of the excellent planning and teaching that enables children to learn and develop through their own interest and motivation. Their progress is carefully tracked by using assessments that start for some in the pre-school, and the teaching and activities they are offered are carefully tailored to move them on to the next stage of their learning. Many start school with levels of skill and knowledge that are below, or well below, those expected of children of their ages. By the time they enter Year 1 the great majority have attained the expected levels and have made excellent progress, and leaders are rightly keen to ensure that this is the case for all children. Children are very well cared for and all welfare requirements are in place. Links with parents and carers, the adjacent children's centre and other agencies are excellent. Outstanding leadership and management have brought to fruition the governing body's vision for excellent provision for children aged from two to five, through the very effective use of the complementary skills of the highly-motivated staff team. The childcare provided in the pre-school meets the requirements of its registration with Ofsted in full. It shares the strengths of the provision for children aged 3 to 5.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the parents and carers who returned the inspectors' questionnaire expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school. There were many positive comments, such as, 'I am particularly pleased with the inclusive aspects of the school,' which, among others, is an example which inspection evidence strongly upholds. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not manage poor behaviour well or help them to support their child's learning. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brunel 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 254 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	63	34	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	60	36	38	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	53	40	43	1	1	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	47	45	48	4	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	55	42	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	48	42	45	5	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	53	40	43	4	4	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)	37	39	49	52	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	48	43	46	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	49	34	38	6	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	40	47	50	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	45	47	50	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	61	36	38	1	1	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



29 November 2010

Dear Children and Pupils

Inspection of Brunel Primary School, Saltash PL12 6DX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work.

Yours is a good school. It was good when other inspectors came two years ago, but it is even better now. Your headteacher and members of the governing body lead the school well and some things about it are excellent. These include:

- Issy's pre-school, nursery and reception (we call this the Early Years Foundation Stage)
- the way you all feel safe and know how to keep safe and healthy
- the help you give each other and people outside school, like the school in Africa
- the way you are cared for and looked after by the staff
- the school's links with your parents and carers and with places like the children's centre.

You all make good progress with your learning and when you leave in Year 6 you attain average results in English and mathematics tests. You also behave well. We thought your new curriculum was especially exciting and enjoyed seeing Year 6 learn about the science of light.

Even good schools can improve so we have asked the staff to do two things. These are to make sure that all the lessons are as good as the best and that you always understand what you are learning from the lesson, and to improve your attendance. You can help by always coming to school unless you are genuinely too ill to do so. Most of you do this anyway, but there are a few who do not.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

Lead inspector

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