

Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123808
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359521
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eur Ing Hugh Mackay JP
Headteacher	Karen Davidson
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
School address	Brent Street Brent Knoll Highbridge TA9 4EQ
Telephone number	01278 760546
Fax number	01278 760546
Email address	office@brentknoll.somerset.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed four teachers. The inspectors observed the school's work, attended assemblies, evaluated break times and before- and after-school activities, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspectors looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. In addition, questionnaires completed by 35 parents and carers, 44 pupils and 11 staff were analysed.

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

- The consistency in quality of teaching and learning, especially in Years 1 to 6.
- The use of assessment and teachers' feedback to show pupils how to improve and to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well.
- The work of leaders and managers, at all levels, in sustaining continuous improvements in pupils' achievements.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school with four mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is also below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, but is above average in some year groups. Although the total number of pupils on roll is stable, there are more pupils in the younger age groups than in Year 6. This is because in some years a significant proportion of pupils leave before Year 6 to transfer to a middle school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

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

- Brent Knoll is a good school with some excellent features. It is a very caring, inclusive community that has made good improvement since the previous inspection, most notably in teaching and learning, which are now good and are promoting the pupils' good achievement.
- The headteacher has been determined to develop subject leadership and other leadership roles and to establish a team approach in monitoring the work of the school. As a result, self-evaluation is good, targeting the right priorities and helping to develop pupils' academic and personal skills. The school clearly demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.
- Pupils' individual needs are identified early on and well-targeted intervention is provided. From broadly expected levels of skill on entry, pupils build on the good start made in Reception and make good progress through Years 1 and 6. Progress is particularly good in Years 1 and 2, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those arriving from other schools. As a result, despite several more-able pupils leaving earlier than normal, overall attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above average, most notably in all aspects of English and, more recently, in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and academic guidance is good and the pupils greatly enjoy school. Staff provide very helpful oral guidance and set challenging targets for pupils. However, teachers' written marking does not always show pupils what they need to do next and pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating and setting up their own work in all classes.
- The school's excellent links with parents and carers, the pastoral care provided by the staff and the stimulating range of extra-curricular clubs are outstanding. As a result, pupils' attendance, behaviour and their adoption of healthy lifestyles are excellent and have greatly improved since the last inspection. Pupils contribute well to the school and local community, for example by serving on the school and eco councils or as playground leaders, but opportunities for them to develop as independent learners as they move through the school are limited.
- Good governance, especially in monitoring the school and in meeting statutory requirements, including ensuring good safeguarding procedures, helps pupils feel very safe.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support further the progress that pupils make by:

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- providing more opportunities for pupils in and out of lessons to learn and develop greater independence by choosing activities, setting up lines of enquiry and undertaking responsibilities for themselves
- consistently using targets and marking to involve pupils in self-evaluation and to show them what they have to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Their high level of attendance reflects the pupils' great enjoyment of school. This enjoyment was also evident in visits to classrooms. During the mental warm up in a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils rose to the challenge of identifying hidden numbers through a limited number of precise questions. They learnt effectively by discussing the outcomes and sharing ideas about how certain questions would guide them in identifying the number more quickly. In a science class the pupils drew symbols to sequence their written description of how seeds germinate and again openly discussed ideas before they began their writing; their interest helped give a clear structure to their writing.

Other observations across the school showed that the pupils are very considerate of each other, respect adults and seek to give of their best. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in this inclusive school, where they feel very safe because of the diligent care from adults and the warm friendship of other pupils. For example, one pupil said, 'There are lots of nice people at this school and there is always someone to help if you have any worries.' Pupils know about and adopt healthy living practices, as seen in their active participation in various sports, in and out of school. The pupils' above-average levels of skill, good achievement and very positive attitudes to learning in a community prepare them well for their 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	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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	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

How effective is the provision?

Accurate assessment and the effective tracking of pupils' progress have helped teachers and teaching assistants to tackle pupils' learning needs and reinforce basic skills at an early stage. The effective deployment of teaching assistants, good behaviour management and lessons which sharply match learning to pupils' abilities have all contributed to pupils' improved progress. For example, in a reading lesson in Years 5 and 6, a pupil was encouraged to share her views about the range of books that she had read. Other pupils in the class welcomed the opportunity to pose questions and showed genuine interest in sharing ideas, learning effectively from each other. Similarly, when completing multiplication and division problems, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were challenged to use various strategies to partition numbers into more manageable parts. Very occasionally, pupils spend too long listening in whole- class discussions, which limits opportunities for more independent work, and although teachers set clear targets in English and mathematics, pupils do not always know in sufficient detail what they need to do to improve.

Extra-curricular activities in the form of sports clubs, local events and residential visits contribute extremely well to the pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of school. They enjoy investigating in science and using computers and show well-developed skills in these areas. Literacy skills are also developed well through topics such as 'The

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Victorians' which link subjects. However, opportunities are not always taken to develop the pupils' independent learning skills.

Staff are excellent role models and provide exemplary care and good safeguarding. They have excellent links with parents and carers and, by working in partnership with them, promote the pupils' high level of attendance. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good guidance and those with emotional needs benefit from very considerate support.

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?

Capable and determined leadership, particularly by the headteacher, continues the drive which has brought such impressive improvement since the previous inspection. For example, self-evaluation has identified the need for pupils to become better independent learners and there are plans in place to develop more practical learning in the school grounds and to make even greater use of the school's relatively new supply of laptop computers. At the same time, better teaching, learning and progress across the school have enabled all groups of pupils to fulfil their potential without discrimination. Initiatives such as using additional books across various genres to present challenges and raise pupils' interest have had a successful impact on pupils' skills and their enjoyment of reading, especially in Years 5 and 6.

Despite some very recent changes to the membership of the governing body, governors collaborate effectively to fulfil their statutory duties. They ensure that all the required safeguarding checks and policies, such as child protection procedures, are properly implemented. Members of the governing body also play an effective part in securing excellent links with parents and carers and in promoting the caring community ethos of the school. Good partnerships with the community, other schools and external agencies extend pupils' learning opportunities. The school promotes community cohesion effectively through assemblies, teaching French, local and church events and by contributing to national and international charities; there are also productive links with a school in Bristol. The school has plans to extend work in this area by developing links with schools in other countries.

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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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The staff plan the curriculum well and tackle the challenge of teaching Reception children in a mixed-age class effectively. Good indoor and outdoor facilities and resources support an appropriate balance of adult-led learning and activities chosen by the children themselves. As a result, children learn and make good progress across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The provision is well led and ensures that children's welfare is safeguarded effectively. Very close links with parents and carers also contribute beneficially to children's learning, for example, by developing their self-confidence. The children's great enjoyment of school is clearly evident as they adopt roles in the 'ice-cream parlour' or explore sinking and floating using the outdoor water troughs. The teacher and teaching assistant work closely as a team and by making good use of assessment in the form of recorded observations ensure that children learn at the right level. At times, however, adult support and questioning of the learning activities chosen by the children, including physical outdoor learning activities, are not used to the best effect to extend children's number and independent learning skills.

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	2

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

There was a broadly average response rate to the questionnaire, with a very high proportion of parents and carers expressing full agreement with all the statements. A group of parents and carers spoke to an inspector and also expressed very supportive views, which are endorsed by inspection findings. Additional written comments were also very positive; a typical comment being, 'My children's experience at this school has been a positive and happy one.' The very few concerns about pupils' progress and readiness for transition to secondary school were not evident during this inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brent Knoll C of E Primary 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	60	14	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	66	12	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	49	19	51	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	54	15	43	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	69	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	51	17	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	51	17	49	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)	18	51	14	40	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	54	16	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	54	16	46	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	43	19	54	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	54	16	46	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	63	13	37	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



11 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brent Knoll C of E Primary School, Highbridge TA9 4EQ

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome during our recent inspection of your school. You were all extremely polite and helpful and you are clearly proud of your school. Very special thanks to the members of the school council and remaining Year 6 pupils who talked to me so enthusiastically. You said that you enjoy school and all the activities that you take part in. Your very positive responses in the questionnaire also show this. We found that Brent Knoll is a good school that continues to improve.

These are the other main things we found.

- You work very hard and make good progress. An increasing number of you are making excellent progress, especially in reading.
- You behave extremely well and feel very safe because everyone at the school looks after you in an exemplary way.
- You enjoy your learning because you do a lot of interesting things and because teachers value your efforts and teach you well.
- You live healthily and contribute well to your school and community.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors work well together and do a good job.

To help the school to improve we have asked the teachers to provide:

- more opportunities for you to learn and to take responsibility in and out of lessons, for example by choosing activities and setting up lines of enquiry for yourselves
- more guidance about how to evaluate your own work and clearer written information about what you need to do to improve.

You can help by keeping your great enthusiasm for school.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Baxter

Lead Inspector

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