

# Brockswood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117349
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	363868
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philip Mann HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carley Holliman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 June 2010
<b>School address</b>	Shenley Road Woodhall Farm Estate, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7QH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. Inspectors observed learning in 11 lessons taught by six teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors, support staff, pupils, parents and carers and representatives from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, policy documentation, work in pupils' books, teachers' planning, data related to the pupils' achievements and reports from the local authority. Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and 42 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How high is pupils' achievement in English and mathematics?
- How effective is the school's attendance strategy in improving the rates of attendance and reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent?
- How effectively is assessment information used to ensure that planned activities fully match the needs of all pupils?
- What is the overall quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- How effective is school leadership at securing improvements?

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. About a half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average with a significant number of pupils from a local Traveller community. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school is part of an Educational Improvement Partnership with another local school.

When the school was last inspected in June 2010 it was given a notice to improve.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Senior leaders have worked tirelessly to implement change and drive forward school improvement. Progress on all of the key issues from the last inspection is satisfactory overall with good performance in some areas. Parents and carers comment very positively about their children's achievements, the positive climate for learning and sense of community that now exist within the school. Capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

While attainment still remains low at the end of Key Stage 2, achievement is now at least satisfactory across the school. Effective provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that these children make good progress from below average starting points to reach nationally expected levels before moving into Year 1. The vast majority of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 often make good progress in lessons and gaps in achievement in English and mathematics are narrowing quickly. Teachers make effective use of detailed assessment information to ensure tasks are carefully matched to the individual needs of pupils. The legacy of underachievement at the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, is being effectively addressed through a strong focus on the improvement of the pupils' communication skills. However, the school still has some way to go to ensure that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average.

While the proportion of good teaching has increased throughout the school, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is because some teachers do not use time and resources as effectively as others to support the teaching of new concepts to pupils. However, consistently good teaching for the youngest and oldest pupils is accelerating the rate of progress they make in literacy and numeracy skills. The assessment and monitoring of the pupils' progress is a growing strength. All teachers mark the work of pupils in English and mathematics in great detail to provide very clear guidance to pupils on what they need to do next to improve. This support and guidance are valued by pupils, who respond quickly to teachers' helpful comments.

An appropriate curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their basic skills. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work with others to act out stories through drama in literacy and working together in small groups to solve problems in numeracy. Provision for personal and social education is a growing strength. A wide range of activities outside lessons provide good levels of enrichment. Many pupils comment positively about these improvements and say that school is a fun place to be because lessons are now far more interesting. This, combined with a better understanding by parents and carers about the benefits of pupils being in school, has resulted in a sustained trend of improvement in attendance to broadly average levels.

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All staff work as an effective team to provide good levels of care, guidance and support for all pupils. Well-trained assistants provide carefully targeted help in lessons to those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those who speak English as an additional language benefit from regular assistance in developing their language skills. Specific mentoring is provided for the more vulnerable pupils and those from the Traveller community to ensure that they know who to go to in times of need. Confidence and self-esteem have grown amongst these pupils as a result of this high quality support.

The headteacher and other senior leaders have engendered a sense of teamwork amongst the staff, where meeting the needs of each pupil is paramount. Some effective procedures are used to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and inform future planning for school improvement. However, those with middle management responsibility and the governing body are yet to play a significant role in this process.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics to be in line with national averages by ensuring all pupils make consistently good progress in all classes.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good by:
  - making sure all teachers use time and resources well in lessons to support the teaching of new concepts to pupils
  - ensuring sessions at the end of lessons are used well to consolidate learning and assess the achievement of pupils.
- Increase the effectiveness of middle leaders by:
  - ensuring that they play a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness
  - engaging them more fully in planning for school improvement.
- Increase the role of the governing body in school improvement by:
  - involving governors more closely in monitoring the work of the school
  - ensuring their involvement in detailed planning that clearly identifies priorities for the school's long-term strategic development.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Achievement overall is satisfactory. However, progress is rapidly improving for many pupils, including those eligible for a free school meal and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Just over a half of the pupils in Year 6 have achieved the expected level or higher in English and mathematics this year within the context of a very small year group where 40% have special educational needs and/or a disability. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to be in school. This is because teachers provide good opportunities for them to work with a partner or in small groups during lessons. They see learning as something fun to do. For instance, pupils in a Year 3 class were given the

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chance to mix everyday kitchen materials together to imitate an eruption from a model volcano they had previously built as part of their geography work. These pupils gasped with a sense of awe and wonder as the coloured mixture poured down the side of the model volcano like real lava. Pupils also respond very well to opportunities to participate in drama, for instance, when acting out a scene on the outdoor stage as part of play about an alien from space. Such activities give pupils the confidence to speak aloud whilst effectively developing their personal and social skills. Achievement in writing has improved significantly for many pupils as a result of this drive to improve their speaking and listening skills.

Pupils from different backgrounds work and play well together. Behaviour is good overall and relationships are positive. Pupils report that there is little bullying but they say staff deal with it effectively when it does occur. Attitudes towards learning are positive in lessons although some pupils can become restless and inattentive when teaching is less effective. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to influence the work of the school. Pupils readily take on extra responsibilities and demonstrate care for others by raising money for both local and national charities. They willingly take part in local sporting and musical events. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and they can talk in detail about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

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

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## How effective is the provision?

The school has implemented a structured approach to the planning of lessons to ensure good levels of consistency across the school. Learning intentions are explicitly shared with pupils at the start of lessons. Effective use is made of good assessment data to ensure that planning fully matches the needs of individual pupils. Resources such as interactive whiteboards are used confidently to illustrate the key teaching points. Most lessons move along at a brisk pace. This is an improvement on those seen at the last inspection. However, in a small number, teaching input can become a little over-complicated and consequently pupils become unsure about what is expected of them and progress slows. Furthermore, time is not always used well at the end of lessons by some teachers to review fully what pupils have learnt and assess the progress made. When resources and time to review learning are used well, pupils quickly respond by working cooperatively in small groups, and progress is good.

A broad range of learning activities are supplemented by carefully planned theme weeks to provide pupils with relevant learning experiences. The regular involvement of visitors from other cultures and backgrounds is further developing the pupils' awareness of the wider world. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills in using information and communication technology. Imaginative links between other subjects are less well developed. Learning to play a musical instrument such as a violin and participating in sporting activities outside lessons provides good levels of further enrichment.

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good and based on a secure understanding of each pupil's specific needs. Support staff work closely with the inclusion manager to monitor the progress of individuals. They provide sensitive support to the most vulnerable through individual mentoring sessions. Staff have been highly effective in applying a range of strategies to tackle poor attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of leadership on pupils' outcomes and provision is satisfactory overall with clear success on some issues from the last inspection. This is because the headteacher and deputy work well together as a team to drive forward improvements. Their efforts are fully recognised by parents and carers at the school, with one parent saying: 'We are pleased with the improvements this year.' Senior leaders are supported by an effective partnership arrangement with another school to support school improvement. However,

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those with middle management responsibility are yet to play a major role in self-evaluation and school improvement.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory but developing well. The headteacher has instilled a clear vision amongst the staff and together they have built a good partnership with parents and carers who now feel part of a growing school community. Appropriate strategies are adopted to promote equal opportunity and eliminate discrimination. School leaders carefully monitor data about the performance of each pupil to ensure support is carefully matched to individual need. As a result, gaps in achievement are narrowing quickly. However, some pupils are yet to make consistently good progress because of some remaining weaknesses in teaching.

School governance is satisfactory. Safeguarding procedures are robust and fully meet requirements. Governors fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that vulnerable pupils and those who are looked after are monitored closely. Governors are very supportive of the school. All statutory requirements are fulfilled and management systems run smoothly. The governing body's role in monitoring the school's work to inform school self-evaluation and improvement planning is an area for further development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

All children make good progress from below average starting points in all areas of learning because of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Children have many opportunities to learn through creative play in the outdoor play areas. Much emphasis is given to the development of the children's early literacy skills through the regular teaching of phonics and opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Staff encourage children to develop their vocabulary and use of imagination through exciting role-play activities such as playing on the 'beach' in the outdoor area. Number work is effectively



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incorporated into other areas of learning and practical activities to give relevance to children about mathematics in the world around them; for example, through the completion of a pictograph by each child about the number of vehicles seen on a local walk.

Relationships are very positive between adults and children and among children themselves. Under the good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator staff jointly plan and organise a wide range of imaginative learning experiences for all children. Teamwork is a growing strength. The level of care, guidance and support for children is good and children rapidly grow in confidence. The assessment of the children's progress is good. This is because staff ensure that significant milestones in the children's learning are carefully recorded in 'learning journals' that are shared with parents and carers on a weekly basis. This information is used very effectively to ensure activities are carefully matched to the individual needs of each child.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Over a third of the parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Almost all of the responses were positive about the work of the school and the changes that are taking place. A very small number expressed some concern about the behaviour of some pupils. Inspectors' findings on this issue are included earlier in this report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brockswood 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	50	21	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	55	19	45	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	48	21	50	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	45	20	48	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	52	20	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	57	16	38	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	45	23	55	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)	21	50	19	45	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	64	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	60	13	31	4	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	48	19	45	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	60	17	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	57	17	40	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Brockswood Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7QH**

I would like to thank you all on behalf of the inspection team for making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed visiting your school and I was impressed with your good behaviour, attitudes towards learning and better attendance. You clearly enjoy being at school and talking about your experiences.

Your school has improved since it was last inspected. It is now satisfactory and showing signs of further improvement. I was impressed with the improvements that have been made for children in the Reception class and the progress they are making. In fact, many of you are doing well in lessons. This is because teachers often provide opportunities for you to work with a partner or in a small group. Your headteacher has worked effectively with the teachers to ensure that each of you has the chance to succeed in your English and mathematics work and this is something we have asked them to continue working on. They mark your work very carefully to suggest ways that you can improve further. Sometimes your lessons are not always as good as they could be and your progress is not as good. This is something that the teachers are going to try and improve on. You can help by working as hard as possible in all your lessons.

The support staff work alongside many of you in lessons or outside the classrooms to provide you with the help that you need to succeed. They are very good at helping you to talk about things that worry you. Parents and carers are becoming more involved with the school and in your learning. Many of them said that they are pleased with how easy it is to talk to the teachers if they have any concerns about their children's progress.

All of the staff and governors are keen to improve the school further. The learning areas for the children in the Reception class are now used well as are the computers and outdoor areas. Much has been achieved but teachers with special responsibilities are going to play an even bigger part in further improving the work of the school. The governors are very supportive of what has been done so far but, in the future, they are going to observe more carefully what is being achieved, so that they can help plan in detail how the school can be improved even more.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann

Her Majesty's Inspector

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