

Broom Cottages Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114096
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378793
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Lee Owston

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	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Whitehead
Headteacher	Sean Kavanagh
Date of previous school inspection	06 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons or part-lessons taught by 12 different teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leadership team, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including school improvement planning, a variety of school policies, including those for safeguarding, records of pupils' progress, pupils' work and the school's self-evaluation procedures. Inspectors also took account of responses to the inspection questionnaires returned by 160 parents and carers, 153 pupils and 24 staff.

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

- The quality of learning and the current rates of progress made by pupils across the school, particularly in English.
- The quality of teaching and how well teachers use assessment information to enable all groups of pupils to achieve their potential, especially at Key Stage 1.
- The impact of the changes to the school's curriculum on pupils' learning, progress and enjoyment.
- The effectiveness of new leaders and managers, at all levels, in bringing about and sustaining the school's improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average, with the percentage of those with a statement of special educational needs being higher than that found nationally. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has been awarded Healthy School status, holds the Activemark for its work in physical education and is a member of the Comenius international project.

A new headteacher has taken up post since the previous inspection.

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. Its warm and welcoming atmosphere, together with the commitment of all staff to ensure individual pupils' needs are met, creates a positive climate in which to learn. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe and secure and are keen to achieve at their best. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive. As one view, typical of many, stated, 'School staff are approachable, welcoming and supportive. Over the past year, my child has gained in confidence and now has a very positive attitude to his work. He is extremely happy coming to this school.'

Achievement is good. Children start school in the Nursery at a level that is well below what is typical for their age, particularly in their speech, language and communication skills. A concerted effort in the Nursery and Reception classes to develop children's knowledge of the sounds letters make is having a positive impact on progress so that increasingly, pupils are entering Year 1 with achievements nearer to national expectation. Progress across Key Stage 1 is steady and improving. It accelerates at Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Overall, this represents good progress in relation to pupils' starting points and capabilities. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and timely interventions ensure that they too make good progress. Throughout the school, pupils are confident and caring. They form good relationships with adults and each other, co-operate well and understand the difference between right and wrong. This is reflected in their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Good teaching together with an enriching curriculum engages and motivates pupils effectively. In the best lessons, pupils clearly understand how their learning is progressing, work independently at times and receive detailed feedback on their work, directing them towards their next steps in learning. However, this practice is not yet consistent across the school and does not support pupils' learning as effectively as it could, particularly in their reading and writing. As a result, progress in English is less rapid than in mathematics.

At the heart of the school's steady and continued improvement since the last inspection has been the commitment and focus of the headteacher and senior leadership team. They are highly-motivated, work well together and understand the school well. Good-quality self-evaluation successfully identifies and tackles key areas

for action. While the school is effective in developing supportive systems to raise attainment further, senior managers are not always as clear as they could be in gauging the level of success of these developments. The work of the school to widen pupils' awareness and first-hand experiences of other countries and cultures has been particularly effective since the last inspection. The school is proactive in securing further improvement. It has already implemented a school-wide initiative to improve pupils' knowledge of sounds and letters through careful analysis of school data to further improve progress, particularly at Key Stage 1. This clear and determined focus to constantly improve provision through the development of a creative yet relevant curriculum further supports the good capacity for sustained improvement within the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve rates of pupil progress further, especially in English, by:
 - ensuring that all parts of a lesson proceed at a good pace and allow sufficient time for pupils to apply their learning independently
 - sharing the most effective practice in assessment and marking across the school so that all pupils are consistently aware of how to improve their work and understand how well they are progressing in their learning
 - balancing the wider skills of comprehension and composition against the recently-introduced initiative to develop pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds
 - refining school development plans so that they include more clearly measureable outcomes that all leaders and managers, including the governing body, can use to monitor the impact of new initiatives on pupil achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. Effective relationships ensure that pupils are motivated to learn. As a result they enjoy their lessons and achieve well. Pupils say they especially enjoy their lessons when they get to work outdoors and carry out engaging practical activities. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were excited about visiting the school's woodland area to build their own troll sculptures. Pupils worked together well to collect natural materials along the way and talked excitedly about who might find their creations when they went back to class. Reinforcement of key vocabulary throughout the activity supported further gains in pupils' speech, language and communication.

Overall, pupils make good progress. Standards for Year 6 pupils leaving the school have been broadly in line with national averages over the past three years. Unvalidated test results for 2011 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in English and mathematics has significantly exceeded school targets. Pupils' work and assessment data show that the current cohort is on track to reach higher outcomes by the end of the year. At Key Stage 1, progress is slower but

attainment has improved, especially in mathematics, through more systematic use of assessment data to personalise learning opportunities for pupils. The deficit in pupils' communication and language skills from Nursery and Reception leads to slower progress in English but the school is aware of this issue and has implemented a new curriculum initiative to accelerate pupils' knowledge of sounds and letters. This is already showing some early signs of success.

Pupils play an active role in the school through the school council, 'peer mediator' programme and the buddy system. These groups of pupils are influencing the decision-making processes of the school and are proud of their success, particularly in securing a reward system to improve attendance. Pupils' average attendance and the secure teaching of basic skills ensure that pupils are prepared adequately for the future. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and have a good understanding of safety issues, including careful use of the computer programmes. They know that adults are there to help and support them and feel confident that any adult would resolve their problems quickly. Pupils talk confidently about the benefits of healthy food and exercise and regularly attend a wide range of activity-based clubs which they enjoy.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop [workplace and other skills]/[skills] that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good and some is inspiring. Staff know pupils well and develop good relationships. This is reflected in the positive learning climate that is created. Positive affirmations, such as 'We can do this!' and 'I'm up for the challenge!' motivate pupils to try their very best to succeed. In the most effective lessons, pupils are active and the pace of learning increases because teachers ensure that pupils know precisely what they have to do and provide sufficient time for new learning to be applied independently. In a small number of lessons, the pace of learning can slow because teachers talk for too long, not enough time is given for pupils to practise their new skills and pupils are not always aware of the next steps in their learning. Marking and the use of individual targets to support learning is inconsistent across the school. While there is evidence of some good practice, not all

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

pupils are sufficiently clear about where they are in their learning or what their next steps should be to secure greater progress.

The curriculum is enriched by a broad range of creative activities that utilise the school’s full range of facilities, including an extensive woodland area. Pupils’ experiences and personal development are enhanced by a varied programme of visits and visitors, including strong international links to develop pupils’ cultural awareness. Imaginative use of themes, such as ‘The School Olympics’ brings together pupils’ learning from a range of subjects and makes the curriculum more meaningful. The school has recently implemented a new curriculum within English to increase attainment, especially at Key Stage 1. The systematic and rigorous approach to the development of pupils’ knowledge of sounds and letters that this necessitates is showing early signs of improvement. However, this highly-focussed scheme is not always fully balanced against the teaching of wider English skills such as comprehension and composition to enable pupils to develop into well-rounded readers and writers.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that every pupil is known and valued as an individual. Pupils say that the adults working with them are very approachable and eager to help them sort out any problems. Effective programmes, including the use of a trained counsellor, support pupils’ personal development and are effective in improving behaviour, confidence and attitudes. Induction procedures are strong and supportive of pupils, parents and carers. Pastoral care is particularly strong and the school works sensitively to support pupils, and their families, whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders understand their school well and show a firm commitment to pupils’ well-being and continued progress. Self-evaluation is good. There are positive signs of improving attainment. Leaders use their embedded tracking system to set increasingly challenging targets and choose the most important areas for further improvement. However, the school’s development plans are not always focused sharply enough on how the impact of actions will be measured, making it difficult to gauge precisely how far outcomes and provision have improved. The skills of enthusiastic and committed subject leaders are being utilised to strengthen the school’s capacity to improve even further. They talk knowledgeably about their individual areas, know the priorities for improvement and champion new initiatives to drive attainment higher.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has recently welcomed new members and restructured itself, assigning subjects and classes to individual

governor representatives. These newly-formed responsibilities are increasing the confidence of governors to hold the school more rigorously to account for pupils' attainment and progress.

Good relationships with parents and carers, the local community, support agencies and other schools, both locally and abroad, make a valuable contribution in the drive to raise pupils' achievement further. Such developments, together with initiatives such as the school's involvement in the Comenius international project, show the successful tackling of issues identified in the last inspection. Safeguarding procedures are good for this large and complex school site. Statutory requirements are met, risk assessments are in place and child protection procedures are very effective in securing the safety and well-being of all pupils and especially those who are potentially vulnerable. All groups of pupils have equal opportunities to develop skills and talents. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school has made a concerted effort to narrow gaps in attainment, especially between boys and girls, so that by the time pupils leave Year 6, the gender gap has reduced significantly. The school contributes well to community cohesion with provision carefully considered, including a significant emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of other cultures and beliefs, which are well-embedded into the school's work. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for the 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Strong, family-friendly procedures for helping children settle into Nursery ensure that children's first experiences of school are happy ones. They readily settle into the secure routines because of good care and welfare, which also results in their good personal development and enjoyment. There are rigorous procedures to ensure children's welfare, and the warm and supportive relationships between staff and children ensure that they feel safe and cared for. This results in children who are eager to come to school, have very good attitudes to learning and are becoming increasingly confident and independent. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the 'flying start' their children make.

From starting points that are well below what is typical for their age, particularly in speech, language and communication, children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. In both Nursery and Reception, teaching strikes the appropriate balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities. Planning is firmly focussed on children’s differing needs and interest. Staff have high expectations and work hard to provide engaging opportunities, both indoors and out, that motivate all the children, even the most reluctant learners, and ensure their good progress. This good-quality provision has ensured a year-on-year increase in outcomes by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children now enter Year 1 just below what is expected for their age. Daily sessions that teach the sounds that letters make, ensure that the children get a good start in the early phases of reading, spelling and writing. Assessments of children’s progress are securely rooted in observations and this valuable information guides the next steps for provision. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The leader provides a good vision for future success and a strong sense of purpose for the setting’s work. Action-planning for further improvement includes the correct areas for development but lacks sharply-focussed criteria against which to measure the impact of new initiatives upon provision and outcomes.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The return rate for the parents’ and carers’ questionnaires was above average for primary schools. The very large majority of those who replied was very positive in its views about the school, as were those who spoke to inspectors. Most parents and carers commented on the improving outcomes for their children and the quality of the care, guidance and support the school provides. All agreed that the school keeps their children safe. Inspection evidence supports the positive responses that parents and carers submitted about all aspects of the school’s work. Of the small number of concerns raised, all were fully investigated.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Broom Cottages 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 160 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 320 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	108	68	49	31	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	98	61	61	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	44	82	51	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	44	85	53	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	75	47	83	52	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	42	81	51	8	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	75	47	80	50	3	2	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)	70	44	81	51	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	49	75	47	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	43	82	51	5	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	38	90	56	7	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	76	48	80	50	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	85	53	73	46	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is 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 up 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.



30 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broom Cottages Primary School, Ferryhill, DL17 8AN

Thank you all for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and particularly appreciate how helpful you were when you spoke with us, shared your work or explained what you were learning during lessons. We were pleased to see how well you all get on together and how enthusiastic you are about trying your best.

You go to a good school. You make good progress and by the time you leave in Year 6, you are at a level that is very similar to other children nationally. You feel safe and like coming to school, which helps to explain why we saw such good behaviour around the school and in your lessons. Your school works closely with many different people to make sure there are lots of interesting activities for you to do. We really enjoyed seeing all of the learning that takes place outdoors, especially in your school's woodland area.

All the adults who work with your headteacher are determined to make sure your school keeps getting better and better. To help your school to do this, we have asked Mr Kavanagh, your teachers and the governors to be a little clearer about how they will measure improvements to your school and your learning. We have also asked that they do the following things:

- ensure that your lessons, especially in English, are quick and snappy, give you enough time to work on your own to practice what you have been taught and develop your skills a little more in all areas of reading and writing
- give you lots of advice about your work so that you know what you have done well and what you need to do next to get better.

You can help your school to improve further by continuing to work hard for your teachers so that you achieve the very best that you can.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Owston
Lead Inspector

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