

Brook Acre Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111202
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	378247
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Millward HMI

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Chuck
Headteacher	Jo Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	01 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 10 teachers, and teaching and learning in 15 lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the local authority representative, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school development plan, pupils' work, pupils' progress data, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance data and safeguarding policies and records. They analysed 132 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those submitted by staff and pupils.

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

- How well pupils achieve in English and mathematics.
- How teaching and learning support the raising of achievement and the impact of the curriculum.
- The impact of leaders and managers on improvements to pupils' achievements.

Information about the school

Brook Acre is a smaller-than-average primary school with nursery provision on-site. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are lower than the national average as are numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. There is an acting headteacher and acting assistant headteacher leading the school.

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

Pupils enjoy the enrichment opportunities the school offers and they appreciate the activities, trips, visits and residential trips which enhance the good curriculum. There is a strong family atmosphere and high levels of care and consideration are provided by all staff members. Parents, carers and pupils are virtually unanimous in expressing their positive views about the school. Pupils talk positively about their enjoyment of school life and they feel safe and valued. The friendly, inclusive atmosphere is reflected in their good behaviour.

Children get a satisfactory start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most enter school with knowledge and skills which are below what is expected for their age. Better ways of working with a newly established team are developing and improvements are being driven forward. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has remained stubbornly low but leaders are aware that attainment in this key stage needs to improve. At the end of Year 6 attainment is now broadly average, although there are fluctuations between groups and cohorts. Achievement is satisfactory overall as progress across year groups remains inconsistent.

Teaching is variable across the school. Although satisfactory overall, it is not yet consistently ensuring that pupils make more rapid progress to plug the gaps in their learning. In some lessons, higher-ability pupils are not always challenged and there are too few opportunities for independent learning. Although tracking procedures are becoming increasingly embedded in school, not all teachers are using assessment data well enough to deliver lessons which are specifically tailored to the needs of every pupil. The curriculum enthuses and motivates pupils but in some lessons there is insufficient focus on the teaching of basic skills. Marking is inconsistent: in some instances pupils are guided effectively to their next steps in learning, while in others, marking simply affirms the efforts of pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory overall but their understanding of cultural difference is underdeveloped. The school recognises that its promotion of community cohesion locally is developing well; however, it is underdeveloped at national and global level.

The acting headteacher is impacting positively on school improvement and has correctly identified strengths and weaknesses. There is a focus on improving achievement across the school and a desire to improve outcomes for all pupils. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place but they are not sufficiently

rigorous to improve achievement significantly. The rate of improvement in some areas identified has been variable and has only recently begun to increase pace which contributes to the school's capacity for sustained improvement being only satisfactory.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and rates of progress in English and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring the higher-ability pupils are sufficiently challenged
 - matching work to the needs of all learners
 - encouraging pupils to be independent learners.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to be consistently good by:
 - using assessment strategies to inform pupils' next steps
 - ensuring that teachers draw on the best practice so that all lessons are consistently good through developing the 'lesson study' approach
 - developing a consistent approach to marking that guides pupils to their next steps in their learning
 - ensuring a focus on the teaching of basic skills.

- Establish rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures by:
 - adopting systems to assess the impact of actions leading to improved learning and outcomes for all pupils
 - empowering leadership roles, including subject leaders, to impact on outcomes through a distributive leadership model
 - further involving governors in the monitoring and evaluation and the setting of priorities for the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In the best lessons, pupils are fully engaged and make good progress as a result of the good teaching. Pupils work well collaboratively and are keen to succeed. However, learning is satisfactory in the majority of lessons with variable rates of progress. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is now broadly average and results in 2011 show an improvement from the previous year. Although attainment is broadly average, it is weaker at the higher levels in some year groups. Gaps in attainment between groups of learners are narrowing. Data held by the school show pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are attaining well and the gap between the performance of boys and girls is reducing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and show a good understanding of safety issues, including the use of the internet. They know how to lead healthy lifestyles and talk about the benefits of regular exercise. Behaviour is good and pupils

are polite and courteous. The school aims to raise pupils' aspirations of what they are capable of achieving by teaching about careers in the 'hopes and dreams week', although their basic skills only satisfactorily prepare them for their future economic well-being. Pupils take responsibility for the everyday running of the school and they make a good contribution to the community, for example discussing with councillors improvements to a local park. Attendance is average and the school is working hard to encourage pupils to attend school regularly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
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 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	3

How effective is the provision?

Working relationships between adults and pupils are very positive. Teaching assistants make effective contributions to lessons ensuring good support for pupils to access learning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and in some classes it is good. Teachers' plans meet the needs of most groups of learners, but there are occasions when the higher-ability pupils are not sufficiently challenged and in some instances, tasks set do not extend pupils' thinking or independence. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across classes and subjects. In some cases, it provides clear precise information to pupils on how to improve, but other marking does not impact on learning, as it is celebratory and gives little indication of what pupils should do next. Expectations of the content and presentation of pupils' work in books are variable and pupils do not always focus enough on improving their basic skills. The school is currently adopting an effective model of 'lesson study' where teachers provide support and challenge to improve the quality of provision. While this is developing, it remains too early to monitor the impact of this work.

The majority of pupils enjoy their education, and the curriculum contributes well to their personal development. Enrichment is highly regarded by pupils and they are keen to attend extra-curricular activities. The school creates exciting ways to engage pupils in the curriculum, for example, when the 'aliens invaded the school!' The school is proud of the 'Centre of Excellence' award, awarded by the Young Enterprise Organisation.

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

The school provides a good level of care and support for all its pupils. All members of staff know pupils well and the school works well with a range of outside agencies. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well supported and their needs are met well. Support for their families is highly effective and the school works hard to ensure an approach which maximises pupils' personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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 acting headteacher provides a strong sense of purpose for the school. The vision to raise levels of achievement for all groups of pupils, while embracing families and the community, is shared by staff. She has galvanised the support of all the staff and the team work well together on agreed aims. The headteacher has implemented effective systems to provide detailed information on the progress of individual and groups of pupils. Teachers, as a result, hold a more accurate view of the attainment of all pupils, but this is not always used to best effect in lessons to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all learners. Teaching and learning are monitored through lesson observations carried out predominately by the headteacher. However, there are plans to develop the leadership to a more distributive model where subject leaders will have a greater influence on developing the quality of provision across the school.

The governing body is committed to the school. The Chair of the Governing Body is highly visible around the school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and are generally aware of the school's strengths and priorities. They have plans to develop their involvement in the school, as at present there are ways in which they could hold the school to account to a greater degree, with a more in-depth involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's actions.

Links with parents and carers are effective and they are extremely positive of the work within school. Lines of communication are open and the school readily seeks the views of parents and carers and acts upon their suggestions. A range of partnerships enhances the work of the school. Links with agencies to support pupils who are vulnerable because of their circumstances are effective. They develop pupils' personal development and well-being and generally support satisfactory achievement overall. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It has some involvement in the local community and has plans to extend its involvement with communities on a global dimension. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and the school adopts good practice across all aspects of safeguarding and welfare requirements. The school has satisfactory procedures to ensure there is equality of opportunity for all pupils, for example attainment gaps between different groups of pupils are now narrowing.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter Nursery with skills which are below age-related expectations. They quickly settle into school life and are content and happy. They play well together, as adults provide good levels of care. The welfare of children is given a high priority. Transition from home to school is smooth as the school develops effective relationships with parents and carers. Effective links with the children's centre on-site are well thought out and ensure children's strengths and areas for development are known prior to children starting at Brook Acre. Activities show a mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated learning and children from the Nursery and Reception class mix well together. The quality of provision and use of the indoor and outdoor environments is satisfactory overall, although opportunities are sometimes missed for children to develop independent learning skills. Plans do not always consistently identify how next steps in learning can be capitalised upon in order to maximise children's learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage team is developing. In a short time the new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made changes to provision through an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation and data analysis are becoming more accurate and action planning is beginning to secure improved outcomes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a better than average response to the parents and carers' questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very happy with the school. Almost all consider that the school keeps their children safe and enables them to

enjoy school. One written comment summarised the view of many parents and carers, 'I am really happy with the school, as my child has been here since nursery. I feel they are doing a brilliant job.' Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors said they were kept well informed and were regularly updated on the progress of their children. They felt that that all staff were very approachable and that any issues were quickly resolved. Parents and carers raised few issues but these were all discussed fully with the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brook Acre Community 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	58	50	38	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	89	67	40	30	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	50	63	48	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	45	65	49	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	73	55	52	39	6	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	48	63	48	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	52	61	46	1	1	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)	69	52	62	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	46	65	49	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	46	65	49	4	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	45	66	50	3	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	69	52	60	45	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	57	51	39	6	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



7 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brook Acre Community Primary School, Warrington, WA2 0JP

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. As you know we came to see how well you were doing, and what you said helped us with our findings.

Brook Acre is a satisfactory school. We were very impressed by your behaviour; you know about healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe. Your teachers take very good care of you and teaching assistants provide good support in lessons. Most of you enjoy lessons and are keen to do well. The curriculum is interesting and you like the range of clubs and activities that the school offers. The school has good links with a range of partners and you like to help your local community.

It is our job to find out how schools can do even better. We have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to work on three things in particular.

These are:

- to raise attainment and improve your progress in English and mathematics especially in Key Stage 1
- to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- to ask leaders and managers to check on how well the school is doing.

We know that you will want to help in every way you can, so please continue to try hard in lessons, keep up your very good behaviour and attend school regularly. I wish you every success in your education.

Yours sincerely

Jane Millward
Her Majesty's Inspector

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