

# Brookhouse Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119344
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	379784
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shaukat Hussain
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Withey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Troy Street Blackburn BB1 6NY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed twelve lessons taught by eight different teachers and three short sessions supporting pupils' understanding of the English language. They held meetings with staff, members of the governing body, the school improvement officer, one group of parents and carers, and three groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to pupils' progress and school management, including safeguarding. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 116 pupils, 18 staff and 62 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 well pupils achieve, with a particular focus on English, those who are more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness with which the teaching builds on assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding in order to provide them with the correct levels of challenge.
- How effectively the provision enables children in the Reception class to develop a strong foundation of skills on which to build their future learning.
- The success with which the current leadership is driving forward school improvement.

## Information about the school

Brookhouse is slightly smaller than the average-size primary school. It serves a well-established, stable population that lives close to the town centre. All the pupils belong to minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. Around 70% are of Pakistani heritage and 27% of Indian heritage, with the remaining 3% belonging to a range of different groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An above-average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities supported at School Action; the proportion of such pupils supported at School Action Plus or by a statement of special needs is below average.

The school holds the national Healthy School, Activemark, Artsmark, Eco-schools Silver, the Quality in Study Support (QISS) and Extended School awards.

Since April 2011, the school has been led by an acting headteacher who is supported by three senior leaders. This is due to the secondment of the substantive headteacher to another school in the authority.

**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 which is held in very high regard by the community that it serves. Good-quality leadership and management, founded on clear systems and high expectations of all who are involved with the school, mean that it continues to improve during the temporary leadership arrangements. Strong teamwork among all staff and with members of the governing body ensures that everyone is clear about their responsibilities, supportive of each other and, above all, acts in the best interests of the pupils. Rigorous monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress drive all decision-making and underpin the school's good capacity to improve further.

The school promotes community cohesion outstandingly well and provides its pupils with excellent care, guidance and support. Its highly-effective work in these areas results in pupils making an exceptionally strong contribution to the community and in the school's first-rate partnership with parents and carers. 'We feel everything is up to and beyond what we could hope for our children,' is typical of parents' and carers' comments.

Most children's skills when they join the school are well below those expected for their age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress so that most usually reach broadly average attainment levels by the end of Year 6 but few reach the higher levels for their age. Overall, teaching is of good quality, but inconsistencies in the use made of assessment information to ensure that all pupils receive the right levels of challenge mean that this aspect of teaching is satisfactory, rather than good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning because the curriculum is lively and adapted well to their interests and needs. However, they do not always listen well to each other or apply their basic skills efficiently to move their learning forward. Pupils are polite, well-behaved and develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They form warm, trusting relationships and develop the self-confidence to take on responsibilities and to talk about any concerns. Pupils' description of Brookhouse as, 'active, exciting and friendly,' elegantly sums up the good quality of education that the school provides.

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

- Raise attainment levels to above average at the end of Year 6 by:
  - increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels, particularly in writing, at each key stage
  - developing pupils' ability to transfer their skills across a range of situations
  - improving pupils' readiness to learn from listening to each other's responses.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently of good or better quality by:
  - improving the use made of assessment information to match activities closely to pupils' different abilities
  - increasing the precision with which the expectations for different groups are outlined in planning and made clear to pupils
  - extending the high-quality marking provided in some classes so that all pupils are given crystal-clear guidance on how to improve their work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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The school operates as a hive of purposeful activity because pupils appreciate that they are there to learn. They settle well in lessons and pay good attention to what the adults say, but do not always make the best use of opportunities to learn from each other's responses. Pupils try hard, behave well and respond well to the good pace of most lessons so that they generally complete the work given. They develop a secure understanding of, for example, different mathematical functions or the important components of report-writing. However, without reminders from adults, they do not always apply their knowledge effectively when working independently. Pupils who are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points in response to good-quality support in lessons and well-targeted extra provision. Different groups of pupils all achieve well, although attainment varies considerably from year to year. There is no trend of difference between, for example, boys and girls or those of Indian or Pakistani heritage. However, attainment in writing is consistently below that in reading and mathematics. Although broadly average numbers reach the average levels for their age in each subject, few exceed these, particularly in writing.

Happy relationships are a hallmark of the school and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils take good care of each other and the school's resources. They move around the building sensibly, and pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate their good understanding of how to keep themselves safe by the orderly manner in which they proceed to their somewhat distant playgrounds. Pupils keenly participate in energetic activities at break-times and have a good understanding of, for example, the impact that diet has on health. Attendance levels are average despite the leave taken for the celebration of Eid, because throughout the rest of the year most pupils attend very regularly. Pupils enthusiastically carry out their responsibilities, such as school councillors or buddies for younger pupils. Their views have a significant impact on

school improvement through, for example, offering their opinions on what makes teaching successful, or their involvement in interviews for new staff. Year 5 pupils' weekly visit to Apna Ghar, the daycentre run by Age UK, brings the school into the heart of the community. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and that actions have consequences. They show respect for those who have different beliefs from their own and an interest in others' cultures. Pupils have welcomed with enthusiasm the recently-introduced system of 'pride points' which generate a good sense of how individual success can contribute to collective, group success. Their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development creates a welcoming, harmonious community.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<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>1</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>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The teaching is built on a sound understanding of pupils' abilities and needs. Activities are interesting, instructions and the objectives for the lesson are clear, and teachers make good use of subject-specific language so that pupils understand what they are expected to do and are keen to do it. Teachers and pupils both use new technology well as a tool for learning. Effective organisation, classroom management and a good pace ensure that pupils sustain their concentration. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution in lessons, recording observations of pupils' contributions and skilfully leading their learning forward through well-considered questioning and guidance. In the best lessons the work is precisely adapted according to pupils' different abilities with clear expectations of what different groups will achieve. However, planning for lessons does not always identify expectations for different groups and consequently these are not made clear to pupils. Similarly, whilst some marking is of the highest quality with helpful comments that indicate exactly what the pupil has done well and the next steps that he or she needs to take, other marking, whilst affirming, is much more generalised.

Recent work on developing the curriculum is proving increasingly effective at ensuring that pupils develop their skills in a logical manner and have opportunities to

<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

use them in a range of different situations. The early assessments of newcomers’ understanding of English lead to much good-quality small group work that enhances their ability to make the most of whole-class provision. Detailed analysis of pupils’ special educational needs and/or disabilities, combined with good partnerships with a range of outside agencies, leads to the well-adapted provision that enables the pupils to make good progress alongside their peers. Homework and extra-curricular activities are thoughtfully planned to fit in with pupils’ mosque commitments. Educational visits, such as the residential for Year 6 pupils introduced in recent years, broaden pupils’ horizons and led one younger pupil to say with awe that his class ‘saw sand’ when they visited Fleetwood.

Staff’s excellent knowledge of pupils as individuals and the strong partnerships built with their families underpin the school’s high-quality care, guidance and support. Staff develop excellent relationships with pupils and supervise them well so that pupils feel confident to share any concerns with adults. Adults make much use of praise throughout the day and, as one said, ‘know exactly who needs a lift.’ The home/school liaison officer’s pivotal role in, for example, helping families to understand how to support their children’s education and the importance of regular attendance, makes a very strong contribution to the school’s success.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school’s leaders have a very clear vision for the school and high aspirations for its pupils. This is fully shared by staff and members of the governing body who all play an effective part in driving forward improvement. Decision-making is based on regular monitoring of, open discussion about, and reflection on pupils’ progress and the quality of provision. The involvement of many teaching staff in observing lessons provides good opportunities to share expertise, although the recording often focuses more on teachers’ performance than pupils’ learning. The governing body is well-informed and members are increasingly willing to hold the school to account. It acts as a very important link in nurturing the excellent relationships that exist between the school and its community. Visits to other schools whose pupils have different cultural backgrounds and to different places of worship such as Christian churches, deepen pupils’ understanding of their wider community. Regular visits from, for example, refugee children from the Tanzanian Bethany project broaden pupils’ knowledge of their place within the global community. Such activities underpin the excellent contribution made by the school to promoting community cohesion.

Good-quality procedures, including training for staff on safeguarding and extensive input for pupils through the curriculum, protect pupils from harm. The school promotes equality of opportunity well through its well-adapted provision that enables those of different abilities and ethnicity to work together in harmony and to make

equally good progress. Outstanding partnerships with parents and carers greatly enhance the quality of pupils' learning. Staff's openness and the many workshops provided for parents and carers strengthen their understanding of school expectations and their ability to support their children's work at home. The recently-formed Friends of Brookhouse School is enticing more parents and carers to become involved in school life and has already raised significant funds to augment resources for pupils.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management have helped to improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it is now good. Children's communication and numeracy skills are particularly underdeveloped when they join the school. Good induction arrangements, good attention to individuals' welfare and close partnerships with parents and carers, ensure that they settle well and soon develop confidence to experiment and explore. All adults are skilled at talking with children and, through well-judged questioning, encourage them to become increasingly independent. Good use of children's mother-tongue languages increases their willingness to communicate and their full involvement in activities. They soon understand routines and rapidly develop their understanding of English, although their language and calculation skills still lag behind other areas of development by the time they join Year 1. Overall, children make good progress so that by the end of the year the majority are working within the levels expected for their age with some children attaining higher levels than these. Children's physical development is often an area of strength. The provision both indoors and outside is planned well, building on regular assessment of children's abilities and interests. It is also well organised with readily accessible, labelled resources enhanced by children's lively paintings and photographs of them at play. Relationships are good and learning is fun in Reception which means that children develop a strong foundation of skills on which to build their future learning.



*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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers expressed exceptionally positive views about the school. They are particularly appreciative of the ease with which they can approach staff and the way that staff respond to any queries. The inspectors discussed with the headteacher the specific concerns raised by a very few individuals. The inspection findings confirm parents' and carers' views that their children attend a good school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brookhouse 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	68	20	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	65	22	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	56	27	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	40	35	56	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	53	28	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	58	26	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	53	28	45	1	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)	34	55	27	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	40	36	58	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	48	29	47	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	47	32	52	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	50	30	48	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	56	27	44	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	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 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.**



23 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Brookhouse Primary School, Blackburn, BB1 6NY**

All the inspectors really enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you for your warm welcome and, through talking with us, for helping us to understand what it is like to be a pupil at Brookhouse. You helped us to judge that it is a good school. The senior leaders make sure that it keeps on improving and have made lots of positive changes since the last inspection. All staff look after you extremely well.

Children get off to a good start in Reception and pupils throughout the school make good progress. This means that attainment levels by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. You enjoy your learning so much that we think more of you could reach the higher levels for your age so we have asked the staff to make sure that you do this. You can help by making sure you listen well when other pupils are talking. You can also try to think more independently about how you can use what you already know to help you when you are learning new skills. The teaching is of good quality overall. We have asked the senior leaders to make sure that the activities always offer you just the right levels of challenge and that all teachers give you clear guidance about what you need to do next to improve your work.

You behave well and have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy. You form warm relationships and make an excellent contribution to the community both in school and in your neighbourhood. Well done! You are interested in how other people live and show respect for their different beliefs. School staff work very closely with your parents and carers which really helps you with your learning. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Drake  
Lead inspector

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