

# Brockswood Primary and Nursery School

Shenley Road, Woodhall Farm Estate, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7QH

**Inspection dates** 21–22 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Until recently, pupils have not made sufficient gains in their learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Over time, more-able pupils have not made as much progress as they should have done. The work set for them in parts of some lessons is not always hard enough.
- The quality of teaching, while improving strongly, is not yet promoting consistently good progress in all classes.
- Although leaders are working successfully to bring about improvements in pupils' achievement and in teaching, subject leaders have not yet had sufficient time to have the impact on teaching quality intended.
- The teaching of the matching of letters to sounds, whilst improving, has not enabled pupils to reach the standard expected.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is improving the school rapidly. She has built a strong sense of purpose among the staff and given them clear direction on how to improve their teaching.
- Attainment has risen in the past two years and pupils' current work, as seen during the inspection, is broadly in line with the national average because pupils are making better progress.
- Pupils behave well and want to learn.
- The partnership with parents and carers is strong and growing.
- The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support. Governors work successfully with the headteacher to improve teaching and help staff in developing their practice.

## Information about this inspection

- Thirteen lessons taught by seven teachers were observed, together with sessions taken by teachers and teaching assistants working with small groups. Four observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, parents, teaching and other staff, school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of the 43 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and of the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school at work and considered a range of documentation. This included: data on pupils' progress and attainment, school improvement planning and the school's procedures to enable it to gain an accurate view of its performance. In addition, the inspectors looked at minutes of governing body meetings, a report written with the local authority and documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

St.John Burkett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school. The number of pupils has recently risen by one third following new housing in the town.
- A Nursery class was added to the school in 2011.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average. There are a high proportion of pupils at the school for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding to help pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those whose parents are in the armed forces) is well above the national average. There are no pupils from armed forces families currently in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress
- The holders of the posts of Chair of Governors, the majority of governors, the headteacher and most other leaders have all changed in recent years.

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

- Sustain the improvement in teaching so that it is always good or better in order to raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - work is set at exactly the right level for the abilities of all groups of pupils, particularly the more able
  - pupils' writing and early reading skills are improved through better teaching of letters and sounds.
- Strengthen the capacity of leaders, managers and governors to accelerate improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - the system for checking the quality of teaching and learning ensures that remaining weaknesses in teaching are addressed and its quality improves to be, at least, consistently good
  - pupils' learning and progress, particularly in mathematics, improve and are sustained over time to ensure better attainment
  - the best practice demonstrated by teachers is consistent across all classes.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, over time, pupils' attainment, especially in mathematics, has been below national averages due to some inadequate teaching. The school's data and other findings from this inspection show that pupils' progress has improved considerably.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge usually well below what is typical nationally. The headteacher and staff have worked diligently to raise achievement in every class. Recent assessments show that pupils are, currently, reaching levels of attainment which are closer to national averages, including in mathematics.
- Although progress in English and reading was impressive in 2012, weaknesses in using phonic skills, as shown by the results for Year 1 pupils of the national phonics screening check in 2012, slow the progress of the younger age groups where these skills are not taught well enough. Writing also suffers from weaknesses in phonic skills.
- Pupils make good progress in reading in Key Stage 2. They develop their skills due to close work between the school and families, and to the attention given to reading in small groups within classes. Consequently, pupils become increasingly confident readers by the time they leave the school.
- The levels of progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are rising and are in line with national averages. Where pupils in the Reception class have also been in the school's Nursery class, progress is excellent.
- Attainment in Key Stage 1 has risen since the previous inspection. Current standards show further improvement because work is, generally, more closely matched to pupils' abilities so their progress benefits. However, work is still not always well matched to the abilities of more-able pupils.
- Progress is currently improving across Key Stage 2. In the current academic year, many more pupils are reaching standards close to average in both English and in mathematics, as shown in the school's current data and endorsed by other findings from this inspection. However, the current year's better progress and standards have yet to be sustained over time.
- The progress of most groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, is similar to that of other pupils. Some who speak English as an additional language sometimes do better than other pupils in mathematics, as in Year 6 in 2012.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make steady progress because they are well supported within the school and because work is carefully matched to their abilities.
- Pupil premium funding is used exceptionally well to enable eligible pupils to attain higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than those of others in the school. Progress is at least in line and, sometimes, better than that of other pupils. Additional learning opportunities, for example, the school's 'Fun Club', extend pupils' learning and social experience very well.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, there has not been enough good or better teaching to ensure pupils make good progress across the school. The school's monitoring of teaching shows that more teachers are now successful in matching work closely to the needs of pupils, and that rates of progress are rising rapidly as a consequence. Some outstanding teaching was observed during this inspection and none was inadequate. The large majority of teaching seen was good or better.
- Weaknesses remain. Although teachers plan learning well for many classes, in some classes the plans are not followed well enough. In parts of some lessons, more-able pupils are required to complete work they are already able to do. Consequently, pupils of differing abilities, especially the more able, do not all make as much progress as they should. The school's own data indicates that, due to improved teaching, increasing numbers of pupils reach higher standards.
- The teaching of reading has developed through the use of helpful, whole-school strategies which include the provision of books which pupils find interesting, and a daily group-reading session to start the day. Although the teaching of phonics is improving, it is not yet effective enough to advance younger pupils' reading and writing standards rapidly so that they meet the national expectation.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and often present topics to pupils in an engaging way. Pupils said on a number of occasions that what they liked best about school was that their 'learning was fun'.
- The best teaching uses questioning well, encouraging pupils to reflect on what they are learning. In a lesson on fables, using a video, pupils were guided by clear and focused instructions from the teacher to think in depth about what they had seen and to draw messages and conclusions from it.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are engaged in activities alongside their fellow pupils because work is adapted to enable them to do so, and support is regularly available. Parents of some of the pupils spoke of the strength of this aspect of the school's provision. One said, 'The school has been superb. They have bent over backwards to meet my child's needs.' Help from teachers and teaching assistants enable pupils eligible for the pupil premium to achieve, at least, in line with other pupils.
- Books are regularly marked and pupils' presentation of their work is good – although with occasional lapses. In nearly all classes, marking and feedback to pupils consistently indicate the next steps they need to take to improve their learning, and this is leading to better progress.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. The good relationships they have with their teachers mean that they want to work hard for them. They are polite and courteous when walking around school and readily engage in conversation.
- Most pupils frequently talk about their learning. They are keen to learn as much as they can in lessons.
- Pupils enjoy school. They have good opportunities to contribute, such as being on the school

council, or raising money for the school or for charity from ideas they initiate. Typical of this was a group of pupils who held a sale to raise money for more reading books. They proposed the idea to the headteacher and discussed the terms of profit it might proceed on.

- All pupils spoken to say they feel safe in school. Parents and carers responding to the Ofsted online survey are unanimous in agreement that their children are safe at school.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, but say that it is rare and that there is always an adult available to sort out any situation which arises.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well across the school, ensuring their safety, good behaviour and full integration in classes with other pupils.
- Attendance in the current year is in line with the national average. Attendance has risen in each of the last four years. Recently, the improvement has become rapid. This is because the school has worked successfully with families who have struggled to ensure their children attend regularly. Persistent absence rates are falling. However, attendance over time is well-below average.
- Pupils are punctual and exclusions have reduced. No pupils have been excluded this year.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher has accurately identified areas requiring improvement and has systematically addressed each. Consequently, teaching is improving and achievement has risen from a low level. Leaders have the realistic aspiration for pupils to leave the school this year at, and where possible, above national average levels of attainment.
- Although pupils' learning and progress have improved, over time there have been weaknesses that have led to low levels of attainment. Leaders now have the challenge to sustain the pupils' improved rates of progress seen during the inspection and realise this improvement in higher standards; particularly in mathematics.
- The revised strong and supportive leadership team is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Subject leaders are developing their skills through well-selected training and are working closely together, successfully raising the rate of pupils' progress.
- Robust systems for managing the performance of staff have been implemented. As a consequence, the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils in the current year have improved considerably. All staff now take responsibility for the results of the pupils they work with, and are committed to ensuring good progress by improving how well they teach. However, the system that has recently been adopted for checking the quality of teaching and learning is too recent to be accurately evaluated. It has not yet had time to have the intended impact on further improving teaching quality in all classes.
- The school has a focus on the teaching of English and mathematics, but also offers a wide range of subjects for pupils to study. These subjects are supplemented by many imaginative activities beyond the normal timetable.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, in one

geography lesson about the rainforest, music and story-telling by the teacher were used well to enable pupils to imagine they were in the rainforest and to reflect upon how they might feel if their habitat was destroyed. Pupils get on well with each other and clearly understand right from wrong as reinforced by the consistent messages given by all staff.

- The school provides good information to parents about their children's progress and an overwhelming majority responding to the Ofsted online survey express their satisfaction with the school's work. There is good access to cultural and multicultural aspects of the community through assemblies and other opportunities offered to pupils.
- The school has good links with the other schools and its local community, including businesses, and is developing these further.
- The good partnership between the school and the local authority has led to helpful support to enable the school to make effective changes to improve.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements with regular training for staff.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The revised governing body works closely with the school to raise achievement. Governors present a substantial level of challenge to school leaders and undertake their roles conscientiously.
- Governors understand the data on pupils' progress and attainment and are determined that the school will improve further. They have a good grip on financial matters. They question and challenge leaders' and managers' presentations of school performance.
- They make sure that teachers' pay and promotion are linked to the contribution made to raising achievement and standards. They have taken action to tackle underperformance, based on this information. However, they also aim for good relationships and professional dialogue with staff.
- Governors scrutinise in detail provision for the pupil premium, asking key questions about the impact of the money spent, and ensure that eligible pupils benefit from the funding.
- Governors rightly recognise the advances the school is making. One governor said, 'Nothing more could have been asked of the leadership team in moving the school forward; it is about rapid improvement.'

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117349
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405698

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	165
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Amy Harper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carley Holliman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 404000
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