

# The Brow Community Primary School

The Clough, Halton Brow, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2HB

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- As a result of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 pupils are not making enough progress in mathematics and writing.
- In some lessons, particularly at Key Stage 1, work is not always well enough matched to pupils' needs so it is too easy for more-able pupils and too hard for pupils who need help with their learning.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils sufficient information about what they need to do to improve their work.
- In some subjects pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length and so practise their writing skills.
- Pupils are given few opportunities, particularly at Key Stage 1, to carry out investigative work in mathematics. They are not challenged enough to apply their skills in unfamiliar situations and deepen their understanding.
- The checks made by senior leaders on the quality of teaching have not been rigorous enough.
- The school development plan has too many priorities and not enough importance is attached to those priorities that will have the greatest impact on pupils' achievement.
- Governors are very supportive of the work of the school. However, they have not been sufficiently challenging in holding senior leaders to account for the standards achieved by the pupils and the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are well-mannered, polite and welcoming. They say the school is a safe place and they feel well cared for by the staff.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives the children a positive start to their education and they make good progress.
- As a result of strong teaching in Key Stage 2 the rate of pupils' progress speeds up and pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who require extra help with their learning make progress in line with their peers in the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 part-lessons taught by 11 different teachers.
- The inspection team held meetings with two members of the governing body, including the Chair, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also held separate meetings with a group of middle managers with responsibilities in Key Stages 1 and 2 and the teacher responsible for managing the provision for pupils with special needs. They also met with a group of other teachers and two groups of children representing pupils in Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors also took the opportunity to observe pupils at break, at lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning; however, as there were no responses to the online survey, Parent View, the views of the wider body of parents were not available.
- A scrutiny of pupils' books was carried out to assess the quality of teachers' marking and the progress pupils make over time. Inspectors also considered a number of school policies, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, which provides information about how well the school believes it is doing, and the school improvement plan.

## Inspection team

Charles Lowry, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Brow Community Primary is a smaller-than-average school located in Halton, which is about two miles south-east of Runcorn town centre.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and no pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is twice the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding made available to the school for pupils entitled to free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children whose parents are serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who require extra help with their learning and who are supported at school action is well below average. However, the numbers of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is nearly twice the national figure.
- The reason for this is that the school hosts two specially resourced provisions for pupils with special educational needs. One is the local authority's speech and language learning unit for pupils at Key Stage 2. Currently there are 10 pupils who are benefitting from this provision.
- The school also has an infant assessment facility that is providing three children with extra help with their learning.
- The school has achieved the following awards: The Healthy Eating Award, ActiveMark 2008, ArtsMark 2009 and ICTMark 2009.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Bring the quality of all teaching and learning up to the standard of the best, particularly at Key Stage 1, by:
  - making sure that the work set for the pupils to do is matched to their ability, so that it is not too easy for some and too difficult for others
  - making sure that teachers' marking provides regular feedback to pupils so that they know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length, particularly in topic work
  - giving pupils opportunities to carry out investigative work in mathematics so that they deepen their understanding.
- Increase the rigour by which leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the work of the school, and ensure that they act quickly on the findings, by:
  - observing the quality of teachers' work in the classroom more often and following up any identified areas for development in a timely fashion
  - making sure that the support provided for staff to carry out their roles is not at the expense of holding them to account for the standards achieved by the pupils
  - refining the school development plan so that it focuses on fewer priorities and, in particular, those which will have the greatest impact on pupils' outcomes.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Over time pupils do not make enough progress at Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics, with boys' performance being weaker than that of the girls. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. However, leaders and managers are aware of the reasons for this underperformance and have in place plans to tackle it.
- When pupils are engaged in topic work there is an over-reliance on worksheets to help them record information. Consequently, there are not enough opportunities for them to write at length and so improve their writing skills. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 1.
- Opportunities for children to deepen their understanding of mathematics and use their developing skills to carry out investigations and solve problems are missed at Key Stage 1. Consequently, pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is not as rapid as it could be.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' achievement in mathematics is significantly above average and broadly in line with it for English. This is an improvement on the results achieved in both subjects in 2012. Pupils also make better progress in writing at Key Stage 2 than they do in Key Stage 1. This is because of more effective teaching in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- From low starting points pupils make consistently good progress in reading so that they leave the school with attainment which is broadly in line with the national average. This is due to the effective way pupils are taught to recognise the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words. The school also helps pupils develop the skill of reading for understanding by having in place a structured programme of guided reading.
- Children arrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below expectations for their age. However, as a result of a relevant curriculum designed to meet their needs and effective teaching, children make good progress.
- The funding the school receives from the pupil premium has been used to raise the achievement of those pupils entitled to it by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils eligible for free school meals are at least one term ahead of their peers nationally. However, their peers in the school make even better progress and there is a gap of about two thirds of a national curriculum level between the two groups.
- Pupils who are members of the resourced provision, disabled pupils and pupils who require extra help with their learning achieve equally well. This is because they are given work to do that is carefully matched to their needs.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- In those lessons that are less than good teachers do not take enough account of the needs of the pupils in the class. Consequently, work is poorly matched to their abilities. For more-able pupils the work can lack challenge and they find it too easy; for weaker pupils the work can be too hard. In any event, when this happens the progress of both groups of pupils slows and they lose interest.
- Although pupils' books are seen regularly by their teachers, teachers' marking is not effective enough in providing pupils with clear information about how their work can be improved. Inspectors saw evidence of repeated mistakes in pupils' books not being corrected and examples of marking that was unhelpful.
- In the best lessons teachers' strong subject knowledge enables them to asking searching questions which demand extended answers from pupils and so make them think. They plan activities which cater for the different ways that pupils learn. They maximise opportunities for pupils to work independently and find things out for themselves. Teachers share with their pupils what they want them to learn and regularly check their understanding at appropriate points throughout the lesson. As a result, pupils' progress in these lessons is accelerated.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to work alongside disabled pupils, those who need

extra help with their learning and pupils who are supported by the resource provision. This gives these pupils the confidence to tackle the work they are given to do and help them stay on task. As a result, they make progress in line with their peers in the school.

- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures. The school also has a successful link with a school in Uganda, enabling the pupils to broaden their view of the world. Pupils regularly work together in small groups, helping and supporting each other, and teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra activities including giving pupils opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument.

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

- The headteacher's vision that the school is an extension of the family, where all members of the school community are valued for who they are, is palpable. Consequently, pupils feel safe, well cared for and cherished, and the staff are proud to work at the school.
- Around the school pupils behave well and are polite and courteous to each other, the adults that work with them and visitors. Pupils who are members of the speech and language and infant assessment facilities are fully included in the life and work of the school. They receive high-quality support and those pupils who are at an early stage of managing their own behaviour are helped to do so. The school carefully monitors pupils' conduct and a daily behaviour log is maintained by the headteacher. This enables him to identify, quickly, if any child is in need of extra support. Consequently, the atmosphere around the school is positive, friendly and relaxed. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and most children rise to meet them.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take. They understand how damaging cyber-, racist and other forms of prejudice-based bullying can be to the individuals who are subjected to it. Older pupils are adamant that bullying does not take place in their year group. Some younger pupils, however, are of the opinion that, occasionally, name-calling and minor disagreements between individuals do occur in school. Nevertheless, all pupils agree that, should bullying occur, they could approach any member of staff and be confident that it would be resolved.
- The school's attendance record compares favourably with the national figure and has been on an upward trend for the last three years. This is a result of careful monitoring of attendance and effective strategies for encouraging children to come to school, including rewarding pupils for attending school regularly.
- In most lessons pupils' behaviour is at least good and they engage enthusiastically with their work. However, in some lessons, for example in Key Stage 1 when teachers have not planned carefully enough to meet pupils' needs, some pupils lose interest, become distracted and, as a result, their learning slows.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Senior leaders and managers have not dealt with aspects of weaker teaching in Key Stage 1 effectively enough. Due to unavoidable staff absences in the infants', governors, understandably, have had to employ the services of temporary teachers. Leaders and managers have not supported these colleagues sufficiently to make sure that their teaching is consistently of high quality. For example, they have been observed teaching and given targets for improving their practice but these have not been followed up. Consequently, the infant pupils have not made as much progress as they could have. Senior leaders and the governors recognise that this situation has not been rectified quickly enough and have put plans in place to restructure the way staff are deployed.
- Senior leaders' analyses of how well the school is doing are thorough and detailed; however, the information they collect is not always used effectively enough to improve the school. This is because they do not always assess the impact of the actions they are taking on pupils'

achievement or use this assessment to identify the most important priorities for improving the school in the development plan.

- The local authority is supportive of the work of the school. It values the work the school does with pupils who need extra help with their learning and recognises the good progress these children make. However, the local authority has continued to provide the school with only 'light touch' support in spite of being aware of the issues with achievement in the infants'. It has not acted with sufficient speed to help the school deal with the consequences of the unsettled staffing situation in Key Stage 1 and its impact on pupils' performance.
- The headteacher has employed the services of external consultants to work effectively with staff to improve the quality of the teaching of writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2. As result, the progress made by pupils in both subjects is above average by the end of Year 6.  
The resource provision is well led and managed. The designated teacher ensures that pupils who are supported by this provision have their needs carefully assessed when they come to the school. She then makes sure that appropriate and effective support is put in place for them. As a result, these pupils achieve well.
- Systems for the performance management of teachers are in place for permanent members of staff. The progress individual teachers make against each of their targets is used to determine whether they receive an increase in salary.
- The school's promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are at the heart of its mission. However, it is more successful in this regard in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Disabled pupils and those who require extra help with their learning achieve well and in line with their peers. The progress made by pupils entitled to the pupil premium continues to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is fully behind the headteacher and his vision for the school. Its members have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development but they realise they have not provided sufficient challenge to senior leaders to move the school forward quickly enough. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school and are aware of the impact on standards of the staffing changes in Key Stage 1. Although they have plans to resolve the situation at the start of the next academic year, they concede that this action should have been taken much sooner. They understand how performance management is used to reward staff for good teaching, improve their proficiency and deal with underperformance. Although they are pleased with the impact of the funding they receive through the pupil premium, they are clear that there is still work to be done to close the gap in achievement between pupils entitled to free school meals and their peers. Governors have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

## 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>	111124
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	422514

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>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Done
<b>Headteacher</b>	Malcolm White
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 563089
<b>Fax number</b>	01928 591314
<b>Email address</b>	head.thebrow@halton-borough.gov.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

