

Brookland Infant and Nursery School

Hill Top, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London, NW11 6EJ

Inspection dates

1–2 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils achieve extremely well right across the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently high by the end of Year 2 for several years.
- Pupils from different groups, including those supported by the pupil premium grant, those learning to speak English as an additional language and the most able, all do exceptionally well due to school leaders attention to detail.
- The highly skilled intervention of adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to learn new skills quickly or to practise those they have not quite mastered in a variety of interesting ways.
- Children in the Nursery, some of whom experienced their first day at school while the inspection was taking place, are delighted by the exciting activities set out for them. The fun continues in Reception where children show great interest and pride in their work.
- Outstanding teaching in Years 1 and 2 results from an extremely thorough knowledge of each pupil's progress and attainment. Teachers use this knowledge exceptionally well to intervene in lessons if pupils are stuck or need a further challenge.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they naturally offer to help one another and know exactly what is or is not acceptable. They are always encouraged to explain the consequences of any over exuberance that develops through their boundless excitement and anticipation.
- School leaders check how well pupils are doing diligently and make excellent use of this information to pinpoint any issues before they escalate. There is a strong sense of ambition, for staff as well as pupils; underpinned by high quality professional development opportunities to ensure teaching continues to improve.
- The governing body is well organised and efficient, keeping a very close eye on financial matters and requiring school leaders to answer incisive questions about pupils' achievement. The strong partnership between governors and school leaders has meant that a concerted campaign to raise attendance has been highly successful, resulting in attendance being well above average.
- The very large majority of parents express high levels of satisfaction with the school, because their children feel safe, learn and enjoy coming to school every day.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons, 19 of which were joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, three governors, a local authority representative and school staff, including the leader in charge of provision for gifted and talented pupils, and others with responsibility for art, religious education and physical education. The leader in charge of provision for vulnerable pupils was unable to be in school during the inspection; other senior leaders met with an inspector to discuss their achievement. In addition, some pupils read to the inspectors.
- The inspectors took account of the 121 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and spoke to some parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding records. The inspectors reviewed pupils' work in a large sample of English and mathematics books from the previous academic year.

Inspection team

Liz Kounnou, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who have a parent or carer in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is well above average; more than half the pupils speak English as an additional language. Many speak two or more languages fluently; around 7% of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. More than thirty languages are spoken.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. This group mainly has autistic spectrum disorder, physical disabilities, speech and language or communication needs, severe learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- A new headteacher was appointed from September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing more opportunities to teach Reception children how to write in sentences
 - intervening actively to encourage Reception children to include some opportunities for sentence writing in their play.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading, writing and mathematics, including the most able. Their attainment is much higher than expected at the end of Year 2 in each of these subjects.
- The most able achieve well in all subjects because staff expect them to use high-level skills for their age. For example, in geography the most able Year 2 pupils identify and record man-made features in the environment. This is well above what is expected for their age.
- Many children start school with higher levels of attainment than expected for their age. Teachers consistently make sure they build on previous learning so that they make rapid and sustained progress in each year.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, far more children reach a good level of development than is typical in all areas of learning. The day is packed with thoughtful activities to capture interest and encourage children to try new things. Nonetheless, there is a gap between children's achievement in writing and their exceptional achievement in all other areas. This is because a small minority of children do not grasp how to write simple sentences well enough by the end of Reception.
- Pupils' firm grasp of how to link letters and sounds (phonics) plays an important part in their success in both reading and writing right across the school. The few pupils who are struggling to read are proud of their ability to work out simple words in this way.
- Pupils' writing shows high levels of confidence and assurance. They write new words thoughtfully, making good use of their knowledge of how letter patterns work. Pupils at the start of Year 2 learned how to use subheadings accurately on one day, and then proudly used this skill to create exceptionally well-structured leaflets to promote healthy eating on the next.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to explain how they work out mathematical questions. A teacher challenged the most able Year 1 pupils who quickly mastered the correct coins needed to buy two objects, to record the least number of coins they could use. Constant encouragement to think about their work and move on to the next step results in rapid gains in mathematical understanding.
- The few pupils supported by the pupil premium grant do very well, making progress at the same rapid rate as all others. Pupils' ethnic heritage is highly varied. All groups do extremely well, whether they are fluent English speakers or are just beginning to speak English as a new language, because a great deal of thought goes into presenting language in helpful ways. For example, staff display English words linked to addition in blue, while those linked to subtraction are red.
- Diligent attention to detail lies behind the success of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Opportunities to work regularly in small groups with skilled adults, who focus precisely on the key steps they need to master next, ensure they gain confidence and make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- A significant amount of teaching is outstanding right across the school. Pupils' writing and mathematics books show they make outstanding progress over time due to precise teaching, which takes into consideration individual needs. School assessment information confirms that all groups make rapid and sustained progress from one year to the next.
- All staff pay great attention to detail, and know the needs of each child. Teachers make excellent use of detailed information they gather from ongoing assessment of pupils' achievements and provide equal opportunities for all groups to do exceptionally well.
- Guidance teachers provide as pupils are working is exemplary. Constant checking of progress while pupils work leads teachers to intervene highly effectively. Pupils are eager to respond when teachers regularly say, 'I am going to give you a challenge now', or when they break down

ideas into smaller steps for those who are stuck. Teachers often stop pupils promptly to review the most successful work, or address any common misconceptions. They diligently mark pupils' work and provide very clear guidance to help them improve.

- Expectations are consistently high for all. The most able have a responsibility to check their work carefully to ensure they have followed the guidance provided. Any pupils who rush this task must go back and be more thorough, paying particular attention to their own next steps. These are very precise and used constantly while pupils work.
- Teachers link the teaching of writing to topic work that covers many other subjects in a way that provides high levels of motivation and interest for all pupils, including boys. They were extremely interested in how Biff the Boxer kept fit and relished using scientific terms such as carbohydrates in their writing.
- Teaching of reading is highly successful, in part because classrooms have delightful reading corners to tempt pupils to try something different. A Roald Dahl book the teacher is reading excites the most able, so they choose similarly challenging stories to try at home.
- Pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas extensively; precise focus on developing spoken English is particularly helpful for pupils learning to speak English as an additional language. Pupils often explain things to each other and help out if anyone runs out of ideas.
- Pupils are keen to learn because teachers encourage them to follow their own ideas. In Year 2, Curiosity Corner displays pupils' own questions to one another and excites them to find out the answers. One pupil asks, 'Do numbers ever stop?' In Year 1, the Wonder Wall poses similar questions, 'What is the internet?'
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, imaginative teaching makes learning a delight for the children. In Nursery, they go on safari with binoculars to find lions and tigers hiding outside, and learn how to concentrate and pay attention. In Reception, careful one-to-one support helps children to develop their writing skills on posters to pin up all around the school to draw attention to a missing dinosaur egg.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children behave exceptionally well throughout the day and cannot wait to get to school. New children starting school in Nursery or Reception in recent days, and during the inspection, settle very quickly because everything is exciting, they feel secure and staff take great care of them.
- There are excellent relationships between all the children who work and play harmoniously. They quickly learn to value other children's ideas because staff demonstrate this throughout the day. Teachers value parents' views, for example, through a 'spotlight home diary' that provides a shared record of things that happen at home for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Excellent attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's success in firmly establishing exemplary behaviour and a culture of safety. Pupils want to behave well because there are so many exciting things to do. They are encouraged to be reflective about the impact of their actions on others and this promotes a strong sense of responsibility.
- Pupils are eager to take part in school life and know their views are highly valued, the school council knows it can make changes if it puts forward a good case. For example, pupils want some pleasant music to play in the dining hall.
- Safety has a very high priority, and pupils fully understand they have a role in keeping themselves and others safe. Year 2 pupils volunteer to help the Reception children put on Hi-Visibility jackets to wear in the playground at lunchtime; this means all the others know they must take especial care not to be too boisterous with the youngest children.
- Almost all parents and pupils report almost no bullying and prompt action to deal with any that arises. Pupils know exactly what to do if they have any concerns and feel safe at all times in school. They are beginning to develop an understanding of dangers that might occur outside school, such as e-safety.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Highly successful leadership and management at this school relies on rigorous checking of how well every child is doing and absolute accountability for all staff to ensure every child does as well as possible. These exceptional expectations sit alongside a clear vision to ensure every child enjoys school life and has a full part to play in their own success.
- The new headteacher has quickly grasped the most successful aspects of the school and is ambitious to ensure continued improvement. Recent professional development opportunities are already having a marked impact on improving the comments teachers make in pupils' books.
- The school is extremely well placed to improve further. The role of middle leaders is transformed since the last inspection; they are now highly influential and firmly focused on raising standards and ensuring a good level of challenge for the most able pupils in all subjects.
- Outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is similarly transformed and lies at the heart of the outstanding practice seen in both Nursery and Reception. School leaders have ensured marvellous facilities for children, ably supported by parents who raise substantial funds to finance projects.
- Leaders are highly effective in helping teachers maintain and develop outstanding teaching. The leader with responsibility to ensure the most able do well regularly attends weekly planning meetings to assist in designing challenging activities and providing high levels of questioning to make them think hard.
- The leader with responsibility to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well keeps meticulous records of their needs and progress. There is similar precision in the records of progress for those learning to speak English as an additional language, and those supported by the pupil premium grant. This attention to detail means no child slips through the net.
- The local authority has been influential in helping governors to complete the process of appointing a new headteacher successfully. It provides further good support through a network of local schools, which ensures that even the best schools can seek advice from one another.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is very efficient and well organised. A joint governing body oversees both this school and the partner junior school, ensuring continuity. Robust financial oversight is a key feature. Sports funding contributes to after-school activities for all, there is a rigorous system to ensure that all groups benefit. Governors receive and ask for a lot of information about achievement so that they make accurate comparisons, for example in judging how well the school is doing against national expectations. There is careful scrutiny of how effectively the pupil premium grant is helping pupils achieve higher standards. Governors expect a lot of detail if there are any anomalies. There is a good understanding of the quality of teaching because performance management arrangements are robust, and take full account of the new responsibility to link pay to performance.

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

Unique reference number	101263
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	425608

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Leibling
Headteacher	Brenda McCafferty
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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