

Brook Community Primary School

Spelder's Hill, Brook, Kent, TN25 5PB

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not consistently good in every year group. Not all teachers provide engaging activities that capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning, inspire them to do well and improve or to present their work neatly. Consequently behaviour requires improvement.
- Too many worksheets are poorly designed and limit opportunities for pupils to think of their own ideas and achieve highly. Pupils sometimes do not have the resources they need to make new learning real to them.
- Assessment is not always used accurately enough, especially in literacy, to match work to the wide range of abilities in the class.
- Marking of pupils' work is not clear enough and teachers do not check sufficiently that pupils have responded to their comments.
- There are not enough stimulating activities for all pupils to develop a good vocabulary to read to a high standard and write with imagination. Pupils do not apply skills in handwriting, spelling and grammar consistently to their written work.
- Pupils do not have sufficient rapid recall of multiplication tables and number bonds.
- Too many pupils do not attend regularly or get to school on time.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are not robust. Some staff, including teaching assistants, are new and not yet fully trained to carry out their roles.
- Governors are not rigorous enough in their evaluations of the work of the school to offer increased levels of challenge.

The school has the following strengths:

- Leaders and managers who work well as a team are determined to improve achievement. Sharply focused plans for whole-school improvement and especially for English are driving developments successfully.
- In 2013 more pupils reached the levels that are expected of them at age seven and 11 than in previous years. Pupils are safe.
- Mathematics is taught well, especially in Key Stage 2 where arithmetic skills are improving. Good practice found in Reception at the time of the previous inspection has been sustained.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium do well. The gap between their attainment and that of their classmates is small, especially in writing.
- Volunteers who listen to pupils read make a valuable contribution their good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight parts of lessons, some jointly observed with the acting headteacher.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 read to the inspector. Others from different age groups spoke to the inspector informally over lunch or while in the playground, and those from Year 6 met formally to share their views of the school. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at playtimes and lunchtime. Samples of their previous work were scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and staff, including those with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, English and mathematics. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body and spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents and carers expressed when they brought their children to school, and in their responses to a recent survey sent out by the school. In addition the views of 22 parents and carers who completed the online survey (Parent View) were considered.
- Some of the school's documentation was reviewed. This included the school improvement plan, the summary of the school's self-evaluation, local authority reports, arrangements for appraisal, safeguarding policies and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than most primary schools. The number on roll is increasing. There are four classes. Children in the Reception class are taught in a single-age group. Those in Years 1 to 6 are taught in three classes with two age groups in each.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those with a parent or carer in the armed forces, is above that found in most schools. The school currently has few looked after children and no parents or carers in the armed forces.
- The school's most recent Year 6 results cannot be compared with current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. This is because there were not enough pupils in the year group to make such comparisons meaningful.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is high compared to that found in most schools. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also high.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club every day during term time.
- The majority of staff have been at the school for less than 18 months and were not part of the previous inspection. An acting headteacher joined the school in September 2013.
- Almost all pupils travel to the school from outside the village. The number starting and leaving the school at other than the usual times is high.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide challenging and engaging activities that capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning, and inspire them to achieve well and present their work neatly
 - reduce the use of worksheets that limit opportunities for pupils to think of their own ideas, express themselves imaginatively and achieve highly
 - give pupils the practical resources they need to understand new learning in writing and mathematics
 - use assessment accurately to plan work that meets precisely the range of abilities
 - explain succinctly to pupils what they need to do to improve, particularly when marking, and ensure that they respond to requests to correct misunderstandings.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing a range of motivating activities for pupils throughout the school to develop their skills in spoken English so that they acquire a good range of vocabulary that helps them all to read to a high standard and write with imagination
 - ensuring that pupils apply the skills learned in separate handwriting, spelling and grammar lessons in all aspects of their written work
 - helping pupils to recall number facts, such as number bonds and multiplication tables, quickly and to use them accurately when problem solving.
- Increase the rate of attendance and punctuality by:
 - working closely with parents, carers and other agencies to reduce the number of pupils taking frequent days off or extended leave in term time, and ensure that pupils arrive before school starts.

■ Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:

- ensuring that checks on the quality of teaching are robust and linked to what pupils are learning
- implementing the plans for those new to the school, including teaching assistants, to undergo the training they need to enhance their skills
- raising the skills of governors so that they are robust in their evaluations of the school’s work and offer increased levels of challenge.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- National test results vary considerably from year to year due to the small number of pupils in Year 6, the high proportions who start and leave the school at different times and the number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Able pupils in Years 2 and 6 do not always reach the higher levels expected for their age. That said the percentage of pupils reaching the levels expected of them in 2013 was higher than in previous years.
- Pupils' progress in writing requires improvement in Years 1 to 6. There are not enough motivating opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary and write with imagination.
- Not all pupils write with a joined script, spell well or use the correct sentence structure and accurate punctuation. This is because these skills are taught separately and pupils do not apply them consistently across their work.
- Most pupils enjoy reading. All staff and volunteers set time aside to listen to pupils read aloud. This is helping them to make faster progress than in previous years. Lower-ability pupils use their developing knowledge of the sounds that letters make to read unfamiliar words, but they do not always understand the story they are reading because the vocabulary is unfamiliar to them.
- In mathematics pupils learn a range of methods to calculate correctly and solve problems. Their success is held back when they do not have the resources they need to support new learning and are unable to recall multiplication tables and number bonds quickly enough.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs varies across the school. Teachers do not always use assessments accurately to ensure work is matched to their precise needs. Some find the work too hard and this hinders their progress. On other occasions where support staff are well trained and ensure that pupils play a full part in lessons, they make good headway.
- In 2013 over two thirds of children at the end of Reception reached good levels of skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. They learn well in small groups when working with adults and make the most of opportunities to read, write and count. Activities that they do alone are not as challenging as they should be in developing their problem solving and language skills.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils in Year 6 who are eligible for the pupil premium and their classmates is smaller than usually found. In 2012 these pupils were three months behind in reading and six months in mathematics. They outperformed their peers in writing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not all teachers provide activities that are sufficiently captivating and engaging. Pupils lose interest, do not concentrate as well as they should, and do not take enough pride in their work.
- Too many worksheets in English limit opportunities for pupils to think through their ideas, express them in imaginative ways and achieve highly. Occasionally teachers do not provide the practical resources pupils need to understand new learning in literacy and mathematics.
- Assessment is not always used accurately to enhance pupils' progress. Able pupils are challenged in most classes, but expectations are sometimes too high for those who find learning difficult. Activities planned for them are not securely based on what they know and can do.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but on occasion do not make it clear enough what they need to do to make better progress. Long explanations confuse younger pupils, and they do not have time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils throughout lessons. Some are new and not yet trained to be fully effective in their roles in supporting pupils with particular needs.
- Good teaching in mathematics in Key Stage 2, where staff have good subject knowledge, is

helping pupils to gain the knowledge and skills they need at a faster rate. The introductions to lessons are clear. Pupils know what they need to do and how they can challenge themselves to learn at a faster rate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils are not always enthused to achieve well because the activities they are asked to complete do not motivate them. They do not routinely listen carefully to their teacher or other adults, and occasionally interrupt the learning of others, hindering progress.
- Attendance is low, but is showing signs of improvement. That said, some pupils do not attend often enough, taking days off to go out on family outings or holidays. Too many arrive late. This means they lose valuable learning time. The breakfast club is helping some pupils to overcome difficulties with travel and enjoy a happy social occasion before school.
- When pupils are fully engaged in their lessons they behave well. At lunchtime and in breaks they play happily together. Those with challenging behaviour receive good levels of support and understand the consequences of their actions. Very few pupils have been prevented from attending school for a short time because of inappropriate behaviour. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that they can tell an adult if someone is often making them feel unhappy. They know about different kinds of bullying, especially cyber bullying, and the methods to use to prevent it happening to them.
- Where teaching is good, pupils give their full attention to the task. They enjoy practical work, physical education and mathematical investigations most of all.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching is not enabling all pupils to make consistently good progress. Checks on the quality of teaching, including those by outside consultants, give leaders and governors an over-optimistic view of teaching. Notes show they focus on what the teacher is doing rather than the impact of teaching on what pupils are learning and their achievement over time.
- The acting headteacher has gained the full confidence of parents and carers, staff and governors in the transitional leadership and management of the school. Plans to improve the school as a whole, and particularly in English, are sharply focused and build well on the successes achieved over the previous year. They have been adapted following a recent rigorous check by the acting headteacher on how well the school is doing.
- Subject leaders have introduced changes to the way mathematics, reading and writing have been taught over the past year. These have proved beneficial in raising achievement in 2013.
- Staff have undergone regular training, but with high staff turnover some skills have been lost. Leaders have identified the training needs of new staff to support pupils' learning more effectively and have made appropriate arrangements for this training to take place. This is one example of the school's strong commitment to providing an equal opportunity for each child to do well.
- The extended time spent learning English and mathematics is not bringing about rapid rates of progress across the whole school. That said, many pupils particularly enjoy their work in mathematics. Assemblies and opportunities to play the violin, to work in groups, and to work in the style of famous artists promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Decisions about how to use the additional funding for physical education have yet to be finalised. The school is in discussion with the local secondary school to help build teachers' skills to teach sports well. They aim to offer pupils sustainable and wider opportunities for physical education.

- The school has a good partnership with parents, carers and members of the community who have supported the school in the purchase and organisation of many new books and who give up their time to listen to pupils read. Close partnerships with other local schools support training, school development and extensions to the curriculum.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carry out their roles appropriately having undertaken training since the previous inspection. That said, they are not robust enough in their evaluations of the school. They rely on the optimistic reports of outside providers for their understanding of the quality of teaching. Governors use their individual skills in finance, safeguarding and teaching disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to the benefit of the pupils. They contribute fully to the decisions about how pupil premium money is allocated and are aware of the impact it is having on pupils' achievements. Spending is checked frequently and governors have outline plans for targeting spending as the number on roll increases.
 - Governors use the school's own and national data to compare the school's performance to that of other schools nationally. They rightly use this information well as part of their appraisal and pay procedures to link pay to pupils' progress. While pupils are safe and governors make sure that pupils are safeguarded, they have yet to update their safeguarding policy in the light of recent staff changes.

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	118373
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426467

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dominic Urand
Headteacher	Sue Arnold (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 November 2011
Telephone number	01233 812614
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