

Brook Acre Community Primary School

Hilden Road, Padgate, Warrington, Cheshire, WA2 0JP

Inspection dates 30–31 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent in lessons and around the school. This has a very positive effect on their learning. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. This is seen in their good levels of attendance.
- From very low starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress. Attainment is improving year-on-year so that by the time pupils leave Year 6 they have reached standards that are broadly in line with national averages in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers provide interesting and varied lessons. Pupils take part willingly in all activities and are keen to answer questions and discuss their work.
- Teaching assistants provide good quality support where it is most needed.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership for the school and is effectively supported by senior leaders and staff. The strong focus on school improvement has brought about improvements since the previous inspection.
- High expectations for raising pupils' achievements are shared by all staff and governors.
- The governing body is well led and plays an effective role in driving school improvement.
- The determination of all the school community to provide the best education for all pupils ensures continuing improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding as the sharing of best practice is not yet embedded or having an impact, especially in the teaching of mathematics.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. However, pupils are not always given time to act upon teachers' written comments or do corrections.
- Achievement in mathematics is not as consistently strong as it is in reading and writing. This is because some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of basic number skills. These are not always identified early enough and so limit pupils' ability to carry out calculations at speed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work and heard a number of pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, the local authority senior advisor and the school improvement consultant.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress, and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 74 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and met informally with a number of parents. Inspectors also took into account responses to the school's own survey of parents' views. The views of staff and pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Christine Millett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Louise Murphy

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brook Acre is an average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at times other than the normal starting points is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, who were in post at the time of the previous inspection, are now substantive. There have also been a number of changes in staffing in the last two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress particularly in mathematics in all year groups by:
 - identifying any gaps in pupils' basic number skills at the earliest opportunity to enable pupils to improve their calculation skills and work at a good rate
 - ensuring pupils are consistently given time to act upon teachers' written comments in their books and correct their work
 - continuing to develop teaching strategies in mathematics through the sharing of best practice that already exists in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their individual starting points pupils make good progress overall during their time in school.
- Children start in the Nursery class with skills and knowledge that are much lower than those typically expected for their age. Children settle quickly and make good progress. However, they are still below national expectations in reading, writing and number when they start Year 1.
- Pupils continue to do well in Key Stage 1. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is improving year-on-year. In 2013, this upward trend continued and the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in reading and writing was in line with national averages. Mathematics was a little lower. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics showed considerable improvement on previous years.
- Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and in recent years attainment has been rising. The results of national tests in Year 6 in 2013 showed the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in reading was in line with national averages and slightly above in writing and mathematics. The achievement of the most-able is good and improving. More pupils than ever reached the higher levels with reading and writing being in line with national averages. However, while an improvement on the previous year, a below average proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in mathematics.
- In 2013, from low starting points, the proportion of pupils making, and exceeding, expected levels of progress through Key Stage 2 is higher than that found nationally. Pupils in other year groups are achieving equally well. However, in some year groups, progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in English. School data and work seen in pupils' books supports this. However, some pupils have gaps in their basic knowledge of number and this is holding back their achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress as a result of the early identification of specific needs and the good quality support that is put in place to meet these needs.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding achieve well, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is reflected in the attainment of those known to be eligible for free school meals. In 2013, this group of pupils reached standards that were in line with their class mates and better than similar pupils nationally.
- Teaching assistants are used successfully to provide support in small groups or one-to-one. This means that pupils' individual needs are met and equality of opportunity ensured.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The results of the 2013 Year 1 national reading check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) were in line with national averages. Pupils enjoy reading and are given many opportunities throughout the school day to read on their own, within a group or to an adult. There is an expectation that pupils will read at least three times a week at home. Regular visits to the community library open up opportunities to discover an even wider range of reading material.
- All pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good and has improved since the previous inspection, leading to good and improving achievement.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and say they 'have fun in lessons'. They work hard and are happy to share their ideas with the class and read out their work confidently. Many are developing their ability to resolve problems for themselves before asking an adult. Those pupils spoken to all said that they 'like a challenge'.
- In the best lessons, teachers ask challenging questions, encouraging pupils to give detailed,

reasoned answers to questions. Discussions in pairs are well established and used in assemblies as well as in lessons.

- Lesson planning is effective and makes good use of information about pupil achievement to meet the varying needs of pupils. Teachers ensure support is in place for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those supported by pupil premium funding and the most able. However, some gaps in pupils' basic mathematical skills, such as knowledge of times tables, have not been identified early enough. This sometimes slows down their ability to work at a good pace, such as when they have to apply these skills in other work.
- Teaching assistants play an important part in lessons. They are well trained and provide valuable support which has an impact upon pupils' learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and suggest the next steps they need to take in order to improve their work. However, pupils are not always given enough time to respond to marking by checking answers and doing corrections.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Routines are well established and learning activities are carefully organised. Staff provide an attractive, stimulating learning environment where children settle quickly and happily. They learn to take on responsibilities such as tidying away or making their own jam sandwiches at snack time.
- All parents who responded to Parent View agreed their children are taught well in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour contribute strongly to their improved achievement.
- Pupils work very well with friends and enjoy helping each other. They confirm that behaviour is 'really good'. This view is strongly supported by parents who contributed to Parent View. Other professionals who work with pupils either in school or when on visits invariably comment upon the exemplary behaviour and describe pupils as 'a credit to the school'.
- Pupils listen carefully to teachers and other adults, and follow instructions extremely well.
- Through events such as anti-bullying week and work with Childline, pupils fully understand that bullying can take different forms. They say that bullying does not happen and that adults are always there to help them with any worries they may have.
- Pupils are able to talk about what they have learned about keeping themselves and others safe, and are very aware of the dangers associated with mobile phones and the internet.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and that everyone behaves safely in and around school. This was seen throughout the inspection at lunchtime and in the playground.
- Playtimes are very active and pupils have access to a wide range of play equipment to keep them busy. The ends of playtime are particularly impressive as games stop immediately, equipment is packed away and pupils walk back into school. No time is wasted and pupils are ready to start the next lesson.
- Extremely strong and successful links with external professionals support the school in fully meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is passionate about the well-being of pupils, families and staff. She has been extremely effective in developing a highly motivated and well organised management team. This has ensured good improvement since the previous inspection.
- The leadership of teaching is good. School leaders have high expectations of teachers and pupils and check teachers' performance regularly. All teachers are involved in well-led teams that are accountable to senior leaders. The quality of teaching and learning is checked frequently and this is leading to a more consistent approach across the school. However, some inconsistencies remain in the teaching of mathematics and pupils' acquisition of basic number skills.

- Teachers are held responsible for the improvement and success of their pupils. Teachers' performance targets are linked effectively to opportunities for further training to develop their skills. Pupil progress is checked carefully and frequently to ensure no pupil is falling behind and work is planned to meet the needs of all.
- The school's view of how well it is doing is accurate. It has identified that achievement in mathematics has not been as strong as that in English and has started to put systems in place to address this through a whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics. While the sharing of best practice in the teaching of mathematics takes place, it is not yet fully developed across the school.
- Good use of the pupil premium funding ensures that the teaching of eligible pupils is focused and leads to pupils' good progress. This demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all. Funding has also been used to boost resources, provide speech and language support and employ a safeguarding manager.
- The range of subjects taught is wide and varied, promoting not only English and mathematics but other life-enhancing experiences such as financial awareness and music tuition.
- Visits and visitors support class topics and themes, bringing learning to life. The school makes good use of local amenities, for example, the town museum and the local library where pupils are regular visitors. This strengthens pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The new primary school sport funding is being used to employ sports coaches in football and dance to work alongside staff to increase their subject knowledge. The number of after-school clubs on offer has also increased.
- The local authority holds the school in high regard and is confident of the school's ability to continue to improve. The local authority is committed to providing high-quality intervention and support for the school as necessary. The school also buys-in its own specialist support.
- The school has good working relationships with other nurseries and the local secondary school, which ensures smooth transitions from one school to another.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors were very supportive of the school. Surveys carried out by the school showed similar results. Parents are unanimous in recommending the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the school well. Governors have been actively involved in bringing about improvements since the last inspection particularly in their determination to appoint the best candidate for the post of headteacher. They support the school in all its activities and keep in regular contact with leaders and staff. They have high expectations of what can be achieved and hold the school to account. Governors take advantage of all relevant training opportunities. They monitor the spending of pupil premium and primary school sport funding and the impact it is having on pupils' achievement. Governors ensure that staff performance is linked to pay, especially in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements 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

Unique reference number	111202
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	426120

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Chuck
Headteacher	Jo Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2011
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