

Brewster Avenue Infant School

Brewster Avenue, Woodston, Peterborough, PE2 9PN

Inspection dates 5–6 December 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.

- Standards in reading and writing have risen at a rapid rate because of changes leaders and managers have introduced to teaching.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well from their different starting points as teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they are well supported and fully included in learning.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning, and they behave extremely well. They say they feel completely safe in school.
- Excellent use is made of the outside areas in all year groups.
- The headteacher and assistant headteachers have an unrelenting focus on improving teaching and raising achievement. Their passion is shared by other members of staff.
- Governors know the school very well and offer equal measures of support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Younger pupils do not do as well in learning phonics (the sounds that letters make) as they should.
- The rate of progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing by the end of Year 2.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were seen jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, together with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, looked closely at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- The inspectors met with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 34 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke with some parents and considered a letter.
- The inspectors examined 29 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are two Reception classes and two classes in each of the other year groups. The school also has a part-time Nursery running in the mornings. This will run afternoon sessions in the New Year.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. In all, there are 22 different languages spoken by pupils at the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- One of the two assistant headteachers was absent during the inspection.
- The school shares its site with a children's centre, which is subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase younger pupils' understanding of phonics by:
 - adopting the best practice observed in other schools
 - making sure that all pupils are in a phonics group that suitably challenges them
 - giving pupils reading books that are at just the right level for them.
- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics by revising the curriculum so that it is more suited to pupils' needs and engages them even more in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities often below those typically found. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because all adults know the children well and show them that they care about them.
- A wide range of stimulating and purposeful activities feeds children's natural curiosity. The use of the outside areas is outstanding, as these have been extremely well planned and resourced to develop children's understanding in all areas of learning.
- Pupils' progress is good in Key Stage 1 and they achieve well from their different starting points. By the end of Year 2, in 2013, standards were above average in reading and broadly average in writing and mathematics. Standards in reading and writing show an upward trend in recent years. Leaders have successfully introduced expectations for writing across the whole school which have led to improvements in the volume and quality of pupils' writing.
- Standards in mathematics have not risen at the same rapid rate as reading and writing, although pupils still make good progress. The school has identified that its numeracy curriculum is not fully suited to all pupils and is seeking ways to use new approaches and resources to engage them in learning even more.
- In 2013, Year 1 pupils performed disappointingly in the national phonics reading check, as the proportion of pupils that reached the required standard fell compared with 2012 and was well below average.
- Leaders and managers have thoroughly investigated why this was and have found that while it was partly due to the unique set of needs of that year group. It was also due to some shortcomings in the way phonics had been taught. As a result, leaders and managers have produced a detailed action plan that sets out clear steps to improve pupils' achievement in phonics. This includes visiting other schools to learn from outstanding practice and reviewing how pupils are grouped so that they are all sufficiently challenged. Progress this term shows that the present Year 1 pupils are on course to exceed the 2013 national average for meeting the required standard.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their individual needs are well met through carefully targeted support and good teaching.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium made good progress in 2013, but from lower starting points. This meant that gaps in their attainment with other pupils in the school were greater than those seen nationally by two terms in reading, two terms in writing and one term in mathematics. These pupils benefit from small-group work and individual tuition.
- The school has been successful in enabling all groups of pupils to achieve well, including the large number from minority ethnic groups and those that speak English as an additional language. This is because staff know the pupils very well and plan activities that help them to learn English quickly.
- More-able pupils make good progress because teachers routinely plan challenges to extend their learning. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment has been increasing, especially in reading and writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and this is reflected in the good-quality work evident in their books. Pupils are outstanding at working on tasks and showing initiative.
- A consistent feature across all classes is that pupils purposefully engage in the pursuit of learning, both indoors and outside. The way that classrooms are organised into learning zones stimulates pupils' learning and helps to focus them. They are particularly adept at visiting different zones during the school day and daily reflect upon their experiences in 'learning logs'.
- There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to write and they know their targets to improve writing, about which teaching staff frequently remind them. In Year 2, pupils used the role play area of 'Scott of the Antarctic's hut' to write postcards home saying what the conditions were like.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are often supported at home, but occasionally their reading book is too easy or too difficult for them and this slows their progress. The teaching of phonics for the younger pupils has not been as rigorous or systematic as it could have been. Some pupils are in groups that do not sufficiently challenge them.
- Teachers make good use of technical vocabulary, such as the names of three-dimensional shapes, to build pupils' confidence in language. This especially helps pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking.
- Teaching assistants have a positive impact on pupils' learning because they are highly skilled and briefed well by teachers. They work very well with individuals and small groups with particular needs to make sure that they make good progress.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, teaching is consistently good because staff work very well together as a team and are all involved in supporting children and in assessing their progress. High-quality learning journals show children's many achievements over time. The children are happy to show visitors their work and talk about what they are learning.
- Books show that pupils across the school make good progress over time, especially in writing. They are given clear steps to success so they know what they have to do, and these are linked to their targets. The quality of marking is consistently good and shows them what to do next to improve their work. Throughout the school, pupils, including Reception children, respond to teachers' comments in their books.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The expectations of all adults are high and pupils respond very well to them. Routines are very well established and this means that pupils are clear about what makes for acceptable behaviour. They readily take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are extremely keen to learn and throw themselves wholeheartedly into all their activities. One pupil summed it up by saying, 'We do lots of learning!' Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about a science experiment they had undertaken to find out where ice melts fastest, placing ice cubes in different locations around the classroom.

- Pupils all get on very well together. They say there is no bullying or racism. Parents are very happy with pupils' behaviour. They say how safe their children are at school. Pupils learn safety in a variety of ways, including from visitors such as the fire brigade and the police. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- As 'anti-bullying ambassadors', pupils are keen to support their classmates out of any spot of bother in the playground. They wear their high-visibility jackets with pride and have been awarded the 'Princess Diana Award' for their commitment to one another. Pupils sold anti-bullying wrist bands to raise money for a 'friendship stop' in the playground where pupils with no-one to play with can find a friend.
- Attendance has been improving rapidly and is now close to average. Children enjoy receiving awards for good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The well-established senior leadership team has successfully driven school improvement at a rapid rate. This is because the headteacher and assistant headteachers have an unrelenting focus on improving teaching and raising achievement.
- Rigorous checks on the school's work mean that senior leaders and governors form an accurate view of how it is doing and how it could improve. Leaders, including subject leaders, have reacted decisively to the dip in the Year 1 phonics screening check results and made sure that improving the teaching of phonics is a high priority.
- Teachers are set challenging targets for improvement and are held fully accountable for the progress pupils make. Experienced subject leaders have a good knowledge of their subjects and have had a positive impact in raising standards. They carry out regular checks of provision in their subjects and give clear feedback to staff.
- In most areas, the curriculum meets pupils' needs well, and especially in promoting opportunities for them to work on their own and find things out for themselves. It is well enriched through visits and visitors. For example, pupils visited Peterborough Museum to see, as they put it, 'old-fashioned stuff', and were particularly intrigued by a mammoth's tusk. Aspects of the numeracy curriculum are not fully engaging pupils because the approach to teaching number is not as exciting as it could be.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Through the arts, music and religious education, pupils learn about different traditions and beliefs, and have a strong sense of right and wrong. They make choices from an early age, and soon learn to become independent.
- Parents are supportive of the school and speak highly of its work. They particularly appreciate the daily notices posted outside each classroom that tell of that day's planned work, so they know what their children have been doing and can discuss it with them when they return home.
- The primary school sport funding is being spent on a close partnership with a local secondary school, whose staff are providing training and support for teachers in sport and physical education. This is intended to improve the range and quality of the teaching of physical education and sport in the school for pupils' health and well-being. It is too early to measure the impact of this work.

- The local authority has provided intensive support in the past, but has reduced its input as the school has improved. The school draws on local authority expertise when required.

- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school very well and bring a wide range of skills and experience to support its work. They have a good understanding of the data and how well pupils are performing and know about the quality of teaching. Governors ask searching questions; for example, about why the phonic screening results dropped and about the impact of the pupil premium. They understand how the school uses the management of staff performance to set challenging targets for teachers, how pay is linked to pupils' progress and what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. Governors make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are in place to protect pupils.

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	110722
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	425202

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Green
Headteacher	Alison Smith
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2011
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