

Brassington Primary School

Brassington, Matlock, DE4 4HB

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- This is a very welcoming and friendly school. It has several exemplary features, including pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning, the strong relationships between older and younger pupils and the very good levels of care shown by adults.
- Pupils achieve well in response to good teaching. Teachers and their assistants know the pupils very well. This helps them provide learning tasks and support that are closely matched to pupils' differing needs and abilities.
- In Reception, children make good progress across all areas. By the end of Year 2, children's attainment has been consistently above average for four years. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has historically mostly been above average. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving well.
- The broad curriculum and well-developed extra-curricular programme contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance has been consistently above average for the last four years. Pupils say they feel safe, are proud to attend this school, and really enjoy their time here.
- Parents greatly value the work that the school is doing with their children. One summed up the views of many by saying, 'The school has a family feel, teachers are friendly and enable children to blossom and have great confidence.'
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has a good overview of the progress pupils make as they move through the school and a clear vision for continued improvement.
- Governors clearly understand how the school is performing and confidently hold the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics in Year 5 is not as strong as it is in reading and writing. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to carry out mathematical investigations.
- Teachers' marking in mathematics does not always tell pupils how to improve their skills. Pupils do not all know what they need to do to move to the next sub-level.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, or parts of lessons, three of them jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books, listened to some pupils read, and attended an assembly. She observed pupils at lunch and break times and met formally with a group of pupils to gain their views of the school.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including assessments, records of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, performance management documentation, minutes of meetings of the governing body, planning documents, monitoring information, school policies and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safety.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), 12 questionnaires received in paper form and the views expressed in a letter to the inspector. The views expressed in the school's own questionnaire conducted in October 2013 were also considered as were the views of seven parents and carers who spoke to her during the inspection. She also looked at the responses from the seven staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Mary Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than most other primary schools.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is much smaller than average. This is the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported at school action is a little above average. There are no pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes: Reception and Year 1; Years 2, 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6.
- The current headteacher works part-time; one teacher has been appointed as an assistant headteacher to manage the school in the headteacher's absence. A new full-time headteacher has been appointed for September 2014, when the current headteacher retires.
- There have been many changes in staff since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years in the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further, especially in mathematics in Year 5, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to problem-solving tasks that further challenge their understanding
 - ensuring that pupils fully understand the steps they need to take to move from one sub-level to the next
 - ensuring that teachers' marking clarifies what pupils must do to improve their mathematical skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills on entry usually match those expected for their age, but attainment varies from year to year and the range of abilities within the very small age groups across the school is often wide. In the Reception class, children settle well into classroom routines and learn happily. They make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, pupils' standards are above those expected nationally.
- In the screening checks on phonics (linking letters and the sounds they represent) at the end of Year 1 in 2012 and 2013, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was well above that found nationally. Across the school, pupils have a good understanding of phonics and spelling patterns.
- Pupils continue to make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress across Key Stage 1. In 2013, pupils' attainment was well above that found nationally, particularly at the higher levels of achievement. The results for 2014, which have been moderated by the local authority, show a similar picture for pupils' achievement.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has mostly been above average. However, it fell sharply in 2013, dropping well below the national average. No pupils attained the higher Level 5 in writing. This can be attributed to a cohort which had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disruption due to frequent changes of staff. Current staffing has now stabilised, but pupils in the current Year 5 still have a shortfall in their achievement in mathematics.
- Pupils in the current Year 6 have benefited from the carefully targeted interventions and additional group and individual support programmes put in place to accelerate their progress. Provisional test results show that attainment has improved from last year to be markedly higher, and on track to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly at the higher levels. Almost every pupil has made the expected progress since Year 2. The majority have made better than expected progress in reading and an increased proportion have made better than expected progress in writing and mathematics.
- Current school data and work in books indicate that almost all pupils in school are making good progress. The tasks that the most able pupils are set in some lessons are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are mostly above average. Older pupils are very articulate, and can reason and put forward their point of view cogently in discussions. Progress in reading is strong across all parts of the school. Pupils read fluently and with expression to interest an audience. Older pupils' writing is thoughtful, well punctuated, and uses a wide range of vocabulary to maintain the reader's interest.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium achieve as well as, or better than, their peers. In Year 6 in 2013, there were too few pupils in the cohort to compare the attainment of eligible pupils without the risk of identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to effective one-to-one or small-group teaching, based on an accurate assessment of their individual needs. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that their progress is at least in line with that of their peers and the school is successfully closing the gap.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in Reception is good. Indoor and outdoor activities are planned well, and children's own suggestions and ideas are incorporated well into sessions. Reading, writing and mathematics are interwoven well into activities. Good use is made of role-play, both to develop children's imagination and their basic skills. For example, the 'Farm Shop' role-play area encourages children to write the names of the produce and add together what is spent. Children show good independence as they work together to solve a problem. Teachers are skilled in giving children opportunities to explore and find out how they can learn from the world around them.
- Lessons are made relevant and interesting. Following a visit to Trentham Monkey Forest, pupils in Year 2 made monkeys, measured them and then used what they had learnt to work in pairs to measure parts of their own bodies. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote 'super sentences' for their own information book. The sentences were of good quality, containing embedded clauses, connectives and 'wow' words. The good subject knowledge of the teacher made a significant contribution to this lesson.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure pupils of all abilities have the support they need and, as a result, pupils make good progress. All adults know their pupils very well and this means that they are able to plan work to meet their different needs.
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to develop their skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. They particularly enjoy the range of music and sports activities. They say these help them to learn well in other lessons. Pupils have a very positive view of teaching. One pupil told the inspector, 'Teachers explain the lessons well and make them fun. We all have different work so we can all get on and learn'.
- Daily phonics sessions are taught well and ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the links between sounds and spelling. This helps them develop good reading skills. Pupils enjoy reading and talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors.
- The school has made the best of the environment to create welcoming, attractive learning spaces. Classrooms are well organised and displays celebrate pupils' many successes.
- The recent appointment of new staff has seen pupils now receiving better support in class. In lessons observed, older pupils were seen to be making good progress. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils were challenged to divide numbers through the method of chunking. The most able pupils were encouraged to give their answers using fractions and decimals. All pupils remained fully engaged during this activity, completed the tasks rapidly and proudly demonstrated their success to each other.
- Over the past two years, the school has had significant difficulties with a high turnover of teaching staff. While this issue has now been resolved, pupils in Year 5 have not received consistently good teaching to eradicate their underperformance in mathematics. Books show that there have been too few opportunities for pupils to undertake practical tasks, particularly to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Teachers' marking of work is regular, accurate and often provides comments that help pupils to improve. However, not all marking in mathematics clarifies exactly what pupils must do to improve their skills. Pupils do not always understand what they need to do to move from one sub-level to the next one.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Almost all pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; this is a consequence of their strong relationships with adults. Pupils say they appreciate the caring approach shown by all adults. Pupils take part enthusiastically in learning activities, ask and answer questions confidently and competently, and work well independently and with others.
- Pupils' high levels of motivation are coupled with high levels of concentration. Pupils are very conscientious and want to do well. They present their written work with care.
- Pupils' excellent learning attitudes are reflected in their attendance, which is consistently above average.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Older pupils ably mix with, look after and have strong relationships with younger pupils. Almost all pupils are well mannered and courteous to one another and adults. They are very friendly and welcoming to visitors. They show good levels of respect for the views and opinions of others. One pupil said, 'We are small but very friendly as everyone gets along.'
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities given them, whether it is being responsible for the music in assembly, looking after playtime equipment or raising money for charity. They are active in ensuring that the school day runs smoothly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and say that there is no bullying at the school. They are confident that if anything were to happen there is always an adult on hand to help sort this out. They are able to talk about different forms of bullying and can explain how to stay safe when using the internet or when cycling.
- Pupils show a good understanding of safety. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Reception and Year 1 carefully carried large branches in pairs while building their animal homes.
- The very positive views of almost all parents, carers and staff support the inspection findings about behaviour and safety.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership. She has managed a considerable number of changes in teaching staff effectively during the past two years while keeping her focus on maintaining the good quality of education seen at the previous inspection. She is ably supported by the associate headteacher, who shares her ambitions for the school.
- The headteacher acted promptly following the sharp fall in standards in Year 6 in 2013. Well-targeted support for pupils in the current Year 6 has ensured that pupils have made much better progress in 2014 than in 2013.
- In this very small school, many of the leadership and management functions are shared. Staff work well together as a team. However, the literacy coordinator has not been able to monitor in classrooms this year due to the staffing issues. A new mathematics coordinator has been appointed, but it is too soon to judge the impact of the recently introduced initiatives.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well both through a shared

set of values and through the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched through a diverse range of activities and clubs. These give pupils the opportunity to experience activities such as caving, sailing, chess and sewing. Pupils in Year 6 plan and run clubs, such as a model construction club, for younger pupils. The enrichment of the curriculum is a significant strength of the school. Pupils have good opportunities to be involved in a range of cultural activities, such as learning the violin and taking part in musical productions.

- The school has made good use of the additional sports funding by employing specialist coaches to lead games and physical activities for all pupils. This has increased the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils and has helped develop staff skills in teaching these areas. Pupils say how pleased they are that they can access activities such as tag rugby, golf and cricket. They play competitive matches against other schools, and for a very small school, have had considerable success.
- Links with parents and carers are very strong and are greatly valued. Parents know that the school cares for their children. They particularly praise the range of opportunities given, the friendly atmosphere and the progress made by their children. A parent described the school as being at the heart of the community.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher is well aware of the quality of teaching from regular observations. The good impact of teaching is confirmed by inspection evidence.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's recent performance. In November 2013 the local authority appointed a new school improvement partner who has worked effectively with the school and given useful advice, particularly to support mathematics teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a wide range of expertise to the school and this is sustained through regular training and careful appointments. Governors are clear about their responsibilities and make sure that pupils and staff are safe. Additional fencing, gates and keypads have been installed since the previous inspection to help ensure that safeguarding is robust. Governors have a programme of visits to school to see learning at first hand. There is always an agreed clear focus to these visits, which helps to keep governors well informed and involved. Governors are now more robustly using data to examine and compare pupils' progress in their pupil premium and tracking committees. There is a determination that the school continues to improve, seen, for example, in the decision to appoint a full-time headteacher for the next academic year. Governors are aware of the necessary links between teachers' pay and their effectiveness. Minutes show that governors do question and challenge to ensure that the best decisions are made. They hold the headteacher to account. Governors ensure efficient financial management and check that funds for pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium are used only for these 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	112515
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	443845

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Adam Durkin
Headteacher	Rachel Bolton
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2010
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