

Brisbane Park Infant School

Blake Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1NY

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Brisbane Park is an exceptionally caring school community where staff go to great lengths to support pupils and their families.
- In Reception, children are encouraged to learn new skills and develop a love of learning. They achieve well.
- By the time they leave school, most pupils reach standards in mathematics that are well above the national average. Standards in reading and writing are not as strong but are, nevertheless, usually slightly higher than the national average.
- Throughout their time at school, most pupils make good progress in their personal development and academic achievement. Pupils who are disadvantaged now make the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan activities which capture pupils' imagination. This ensures pupils are keen to learn.
- The school works exceptionally well with families and external agencies. Together they provide support for those pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk. As a result, pupils say they feel very safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils learn to respect each other, the adults around them and their school. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The dedicated headteachers work exceptionally well together. They constantly review what the school does and make changes when necessary. Because they lead by example, they have the full support of the very caring staff team who always give of their best.
- Governors have developed their roles in order to provide a good balance of support and challenge for senior leaders. Together they have maintained a good standard in the quality of teaching and in accelerating pupils' achievement. The school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils often use incorrect grammar when they are talking and this is reflected in their writing.
- When they read, pupils do not systematically find out the meaning of unfamiliar words in order to expand their vocabulary.
- There are not enough opportunities for teachers to see best practice in other schools.
- Some middle managers are new to their roles and have not fully developed ways in which to further accelerate progress in their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in eight part lessons, two of which were jointly observed with one of the headteachers. Sessions led by teaching assistants were also observed. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with: school staff, groups of pupils, the headteachers, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, its development plans, records of pupils' standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils' work in their books.
- There were not enough parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to generate a report. However, the inspector met with several parents as they brought their children to school and took into account the school's own parental and children's surveys. Seven responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were also reviewed by the inspector.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brisbane Park is smaller than the average-sized school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is almost double that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is much higher than that found nationally.
- Though almost all pupils are from a White British background, there are a few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- There have been several changes in staffing since the previous inspection. The literacy and numeracy coordinators took up these roles in September 2014.
- Since September 2014, the former deputy headteacher has shared the headteacher role with the soon-to-retire headteacher. The former deputy headteacher will take up her substantive role as headteacher from January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - taking every opportunity to encourage pupils to use correct grammar when they are speaking in order to help them improve their grammar when they are writing across all subjects
 - developing routines so that when pupils come across an unfamiliar word, they are able to find out its meaning and expand their vocabulary to use in their own work
 - providing more opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to see best practice across the school and in other schools.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by developing the role of middle leaders so that they build a range of strategies to check on how well pupils are progressing in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteachers are working exceptionally well together to ensure a smooth transition when the former deputy headteacher takes on the full-time role as headteacher after Christmas 2014. They always give of their best and this is reciprocated by staff and pupils alike.
- The school's improvement plan states very clearly the school's priorities and self-evaluation is both realistic and rigorous. This is because school leaders constantly check on the quality of learning and teaching in the school and have a clear view of how they can continue to raise standards.
- The headteachers, teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers work well together. They have regular discussions about what they can do to improve the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning. Although good practice is shared through meetings and training, there are not enough opportunities for staff to see best practice across the school and in other schools.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles and at an early stage of developing their skills in checking on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils in their areas of responsibility. However, their enthusiasm and commitment are palpable.
- Strategies to improve attendance have resulted in above-average attendance in the previous academic year and this continues to rise.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support in recognition of how well the school is led and managed. It has supported and advised the school in its recent appointment of a new headteacher.
- The pupil premium funding is used very effectively. It is directed towards supporting the very many disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals so that they make the same good progress as their classmates. School leaders and all staff demonstrate very clearly their wholehearted commitment to ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The curriculum meets well the needs of all pupils in preparation for life in modern Britain. It is made more exciting by a range of trips and visitors to school that provide pupils with memorable experiences. For example, the day out to Liverpool, which included seeing a performance of *The Lion King*, has left a lasting impression on many of the pupils who had not previously ventured beyond Barrow.
- The school works tirelessly to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of British values and make meaningful comparisons of religions and cultures that are different from their own. For example, when they visited a Buddhist temple, not only did they see the difference in architecture when they compared it to their local church, they also engaged in a time of meditation.
- The primary school sport funding is used to good effect to broaden sporting opportunities for pupils, while developing the expertise of staff, using specialist coaches. This has led, for example, to an increase in opportunities for pupils to try activities such as gymnastics, multi-skills and dance. Staff can see that since the increase in sporting opportunities, the physical stamina of pupils has been much stronger.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Governors bring with them a wide range of skills. Several are regular visitors to the school and invest much of their free time in the school. Those who spoke to the inspector had an accurate view of the strengths of the school and areas for further improvement. They have a good understanding of data showing pupils' achievement and how this compares with other schools. They check carefully on the impact of initiatives to develop pupils' personal development and academic achievement as both have high importance to them. Governors have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and how it is directly linked to the salary structure of staff. They understand how any underperformance would be tackled.
 - Governors are highly conscientious in the way they undertake all their statutory duties. They make sure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements so that pupils and staff are extremely safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and at lunchtimes and playtimes. They are polite and show care and consideration for others. Parents who spoke to the inspector share this view, as does the school's parental survey.

- Year 2 pupils are buddies for new pupils, which helps them to settle well into school life. The older pupils enjoy this responsibility. Pupils value their school community, they take pride in wearing their uniform and those who are awarded 'star of the week' wear their special sweater with great pride.
- Some pupils who join the school do not automatically choose to behave in an appropriate manner. Staff work hard with these pupils and their parents to develop routines that encourage pupils to develop better behaviour and manners while learning how to respect others and their environments. On a few occasions when activities do not fully engage them, some pupils become fidgety and lack concentration.
- There are generations of families who have attended this school and a growing number of pupils who have come from overseas. They all get on well together and are happy to come to school. This is reflected in above-average and improving attendance and punctuality.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- There are exceptionally strong links with professional agencies beyond school which contribute to supporting pupils and their families who may be at risk of being vulnerable. All staff, volunteers and governors go the extra mile in ensuring pupils develop their capacity to cope with changes in family circumstances.
- The school is proactive in supporting parents with ways in which they can safely engage with their children at home and further afield. For example, before holiday periods, staff gather a raft of information for parents to encourage them to visit places beyond the local community and learn new things together as a family, while being mindful of how to keep their children safe. This is perhaps why so many parents believe Brisbane Park is 'brilliant'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying but are adamant it just does not happen at school. They are aware of why the school blocks certain websites in order to keep pupils safe.
- When Guy Fawkes Night was approaching, pupils walked to the local fire station and learnt about potential dangers of fireworks and bonfires and the importance of keeping themselves safe. Work in pupils' books showed that this had a positive impact on raising their awareness.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils make good progress because of the good quality of teaching across the school. This is confirmed by evidence collected during the inspection, work seen in pupils' books and through the checks made by school leaders.
- Staff provide good support for the learning of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English.
- Since the previous inspection, a whole-school approach to teaching mathematics has been adopted. This has resulted in rapid acceleration in the progress pupils make as they move through the school. Learning is brought to life beyond the classroom. For example, pupils excitedly told the inspector about their trip to a local supermarket where they bought ingredients to make a pizza. They estimated the cost of the shopping before paying the bill. They made good progress in understanding the importance of mental mathematics skills for everyday life as an adult.
- From an early age, children develop a love of books. This was seen in a Reception class when children chose a book and quietly sat down to read at the start of the school day. This gave a very calm start to the school day and helped pupils to settle quickly.
- Year 2 pupils who read to the inspector demonstrated their interest in books. They re-told the story so far and then read with expression. When they came across an unfamiliar word, they skilfully used their phonics knowledge to work it out. However, pupils do not routinely find out what new words mean and they do not always write down these words so that they can extend their vocabulary to use at a later stage in their own writing.
- Pupils take pride in their work and this could be seen with Year 2 pupils as they made their own poppies on Armistice Day. Pupils drew on this experience as they wrote a set of step-by-step instructions about how to make a poppy using tissue paper, a pipe cleaner and sticky tape. With their partner, they told each other each sentence before writing it down. This helped them to check that each instruction made sense before writing it down. All pupils made good progress with their writing skills during this session.
- Pupils often use incorrect grammar when they are speaking and this results in errors in their writing. Although adults provide high-quality marking, they do not always correct grammatical errors as pupils are talking in lessons and as they move around the school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In the Year 1 reading screening check in 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was an improvement on the previous year and in line with the national average. This was because teachers and teaching assistants have had good training and are now extremely competent in the teaching of phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make). The pupils who struggle to read are given effective support and this leads to rapid improvements as they move through the school.
- Since the previous inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen. In recent years, pupils have reached standards in mathematics which are well above the national average. Although standards reached in reading and writing are above the national average, they are not as strong as those in mathematics. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education by the time they leave school because they achieve well academically and have made great strides in their personal development. Pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics and good progress in reading and writing because of the good quality of teaching and support they receive.
- Those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve equally well as their classmates because their specific needs are identified from an early age. Very caring support from school staff and highly effective links with external agencies ensure that individual support needs are very well met.
- The pupil premium funding is used very effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make progress which is as rapid as that of their classmates. In 2014, data show that there were no gaps in standards in reading, writing or mathematics between this group and non-disadvantaged pupils in school. Disadvantaged pupils reached higher standards than this group nationally.
- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well because teachers and teaching assistants work closely to meet pupils' needs. These pupils make the same good progress as others in their class.
- Like their classmates, the most able pupils make good progress. They are challenged to aim high, resulting in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics being significantly greater than the national averages.

The early years provision is good

- When they join Reception, children learn to settle quickly into school routines. This is because of the excellent links the school has with the local nursery and with families. The staff visit children in their nursery and organise visits to Reception so that they get to know what the children enjoy doing and their dislikes.
- At the start and end of the day, staff make themselves available so that there is an ongoing dialogue between school and home. This is particularly helpful for parents to find out how they can support their children at home and for staff to have a clear picture of help that may be needed in school.
- Children are exceptionally well cared for. They learn how to keep safe; this was seen as they used scissors with great care to cut out shapes and then put the scissors back where they belonged. Behaviour is good because there are very clear rewards and sanctions. Children develop a sense of responsibility in all that they do.
- Children are taught well by a dedicated team of staff who are creative in providing activities indoors and outside. Staff are led and managed well. There is a sharp and effective focus on encouraging pupils to talk about what they do and developing listening skills because children's communication and language skills are generally weak when they join Reception.
- Activities both indoors and outside support children's learning and progress well. Staff question children effectively and encourage them to explore and investigate their ideas. For example, children carefully took turns to peel vegetables when they were making pumpkin soup and as they were doing so, they were asked about how they thought the vegetables had grown from seeds in the soil. This developed a good understanding of how, like vegetables that are growing, we all need to drink plenty of water, and we also need to eat fresh food to stay healthy.
- Assessment procedures are in place to ensure that all groups of children achieve equally well. For example, several children with speech and language difficulties receive additional support from an external specialist in this field, which helps to accelerate their progress.
- The majority of children completing their Reception year in 2014 reached a good level of development,

which was an improvement on the previous year. Whether they are children in receipt of additional funding, disabled children or children with special educational needs, the most able children or children who speak English as an additional language, they all make good progress from their individual starting points. They are well prepared for the work that they will meet in Year 1.

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	112199
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	448436

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	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Smith
Co-Headteachers	Pat Burton and Andrea Sweeting
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2010
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