

Brackensdale Infant School

Walthamstow Drive, Mackworth Estate, Derby, DE22 4BS

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	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

- The headteacher and staff have worked well together to improve the school.
- Staff have very strong working relationships with the pupils. They value each individual and give them lots of praise and support, which raises their self-confidence.
- Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds make good overall progress and most achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder is good and meets their needs well.
- Provision for children in the early years is good, especially in the Nursery.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and try hard to please the adults around them. They behave well and have a good understanding of how to keep everyone safe.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers provide activities that interest the pupils.
- The school has considerably improved the checks made on pupils' progress. Teachers use this information well when planning and teaching.
- Teaching assistants are skilled in providing just the right amount of support to pupils.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders make effective checks on all aspects of the school's work and have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Senior staff have a good grasp of what works well and where further improvement can be made.
- Governors have developed their roles well. They support and challenge school leaders in the drive towards further improvement in teaching and learning.
- All of the parents spoken to were very pleased about the quality of care and education their children receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- White British boys do not attain as highly as other groups of pupils.
- Pupils do not always speak or write at depth, or solve mathematical problems speedily.
- Not enough teaching is highly effective because staff do not share best practice in planning and teaching often enough. On occasion, work does not fully challenge pupils of different abilities, particularly the most-able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in parts of 15 lessons and a range of other activities. Several of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also looked in detail at the work in pupils' books and heard several pupils read.
- The inspectors held planned and informal discussions with pupils throughout the inspection.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and staff with additional responsibilities, including those for the early years and special educational needs.
- The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the governing body and the local authority. There were 17 responses to the parent questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors also spoke to several parents at the start of the inspection. They also took account of 28 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress. They also took account of documents and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a school that is close to the average-sized primary school.
- Children attend the 52-place Nursery part time in the mornings or afternoons. Children attend one of the two Reception classes full time. There are five single-aged classes for pupils in Key Stage 1.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below the national average. Those who speak English as an additional language are mostly fluent in English.
- The overall proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. However, there is a much higher proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs than is seen in most schools.
- There is specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs, specifically autism. Currently there are 16 pupils across the age range based in a special unit named 'The Ark'.
- There have been recent changes in the leadership team and the roles of special educational needs leader and deputy headteacher are currently being carried out on a temporary basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by:
 - ensuring that White British boys attain as highly as other groups of pupils
 - improving pupils' ability to speak and write confidently and at greater length and depth
 - enabling pupils to use what they already know to solve mathematical problems speedily and accurately.
- Improve teaching to ensure pupils make progress at an even faster rate by:
 - ensuring that activities consistently challenge pupils of different abilities, especially the most-able pupils
 - building on the sharing of best practice in planning, teaching and learning across the school so that teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils to learn exceptionally well.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior staff work well together with a focus on improving the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. They do this while sustaining the pastoral strengths of the school that are widely acknowledged by parents. They have created a culture in which pupils can thrive, where teaching and behaviour are good.
- The previous inspection galvanised senior staff and governors into taking action to improve the school. With the effective support of the local authority, they determinedly set about tackling what needed to be done. This has had a positive impact on the quality of leadership and has led to better teaching and achievement.
- The headteacher provides good leadership, well supported by her senior team. One of the key improvements made has been a full overhaul of the school's assessment procedures. Pupils' progress is now checked and tracked much more carefully. This gives leaders a clearer picture of how well they are doing, including any underachievement on the part of individuals and groups of pupils.
- The headteacher regularly discusses with staff the progress made by individuals to identify where additional support may be needed. The quality of this support is good, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including pupils with autism. Leaders measure the impact of such initiatives well to identify what else may be needed.
- Leadership of the enhanced resource unit is good. Staff ensure that activities and support are tailored to the individual pupils and their particular needs. Where appropriate, some pupils work in the mainstream classes, while others are taught within the unit. Leaders monitor the attendance, behaviour and progress of the pupils to ensure they have every chance to succeed.
- Procedures to check the quality of teaching have improved and are now good. Senior leaders and staff with subject responsibilities both observe lessons and look at pupils' work. They link such information well to the management of performance and to a good programme of training run by the school and external providers. Staff have the opportunity to share good practice in planning, teaching and learning. Some staff, including those in support roles, say they would like even more such opportunities to ensure their effectiveness improves still further.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the pupils well. Staff often make learning hands on. They make good use of visits to local and wider places of interest to motivate the pupils. For example, all Reception pupils enjoyed a visit to an environmental centre during the inspection. Such activities extend the pupils' sometimes limited experiences of the world and help prepare them for the next stage in their education.
- The school has reviewed how it helps pupils develop an understanding of British values, relevant to their age and stage of development. There has been a recent focus on democracy and helping pupils develop a greater sense of responsibility. Pupils elect representatives to the school council, including from 'The Ark'. Their actions included the decision that they needed a new 'friendship bench' and the choice of a sponsorship partner. Such activities help prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. For example, 'R time' activities include children talking to each other to improve their listening skills and respect for others; in religious education pupils have learned about 'special journeys', including a study of other faiths; and in reading activities, pupils have looked at Aboriginal culture.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Leaders and governors review policies and practices carefully to ensure that they meet current guidance effectively. They make careful checks on the suitability of adults to work with children. Staff supervise pupils well as they move around

the school, including pupils with autism.

- Provision for pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium is good. Their particular needs are recognised and tailored help is provided for individuals and small groups, including higher attainers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported across the school. Staff are particularly good at giving the right amount of help to the pupils.
- Provision for pupils in 'The Ark' is well organised and meets the needs of the pupils well. The flexible approach of staff enables pupils to take part in whole-school activities or to work in smaller groups, according to their needs. Such activities show the school's full commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium is used effectively. The school works as part of a local sports partnership. This is effective and has had a positive impact by increasing the range of activities provided. There are now more opportunities for the children to take part in competitive sports appropriate to their age.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of care and education provided for their children. Several spoke with warmth about how well they feel their children are known to the staff and cared for as individuals.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Governors have undertaken training and have a good grasp of their roles and responsibilities. They have ensured decisive action has been taken to address previous shortcomings in their effectiveness. Governors use the information gained from the checks they make to tackle any underperformance. They understand the data about the progress made by different groups of pupils and are well informed about the quality of teaching. This enables them to make appropriate decisions about teachers' pay progression based on pupils' performance.
- Governors are effective not only in supporting the school but also in holding leaders to account for the progress that pupils make. They have developed their ability to question and challenge the decisions made by school leaders. They are keen to develop their programme of visits to classrooms and discussions with subject leaders further so that they are all well informed about provision from first-hand experience.
- Governors ensure that staff training is up-to-date and checks are made to safeguard everyone. Good leadership and governance show that the school has the capacity to improve further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils display good attitudes towards learning. They like working with the adults around them and very much enjoy the attention and support they receive. Because they are keen to win the approval of the adults they work with, most consistently try hard. This is shown in the amount and quality of work that many of them produce.
- Pupils' behaviour at playtimes is good and they get on well together. They happily play with others and enjoy sharing the equipment. In assemblies, they join in singing enthusiastically. Staff celebrate and reward positive behaviour, including for 'good signing and good singing'. Pupils' behaviour in 'The Ark' is good; for example, they understand they have to take turns when speaking and using the equipment.
- School records and observations show there is very little disruption to learning by inappropriate behaviour. There have been no recent exclusions.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, with some older ones leading play activities. Pupils often join in discussions happily and share their ideas. However, some struggle to express themselves well and at

times offer little to discussions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. For their age, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their friends safe. Pupils, including those in 'The Ark', recognise that their behaviour can have an impact on others, including at playtimes. They understand the work of the emergency services and why they have fire evacuation practices.
- Pupils know that bullying is a deliberate and repeated action. They recognise that 'being mean' to others, pushing other children or name-calling is never acceptable in school. Occasionally, a few pupils are keen to 'show off' to others by saying and doing things they have heard older friends do out of school. The school deals with such incidents well and makes clear what is acceptable and what is not. Parents are confident that staff manage behaviour well and, should incidents occur, they are handled appropriately. Pupils believe that staff will respond to any worries they have.
- The attendance of pupils is below the national average but has improved in the last year. The school takes a strong stance on absence and lateness by stressing the impact this has on pupils' learning. The education welfare officer works with parents of children with repeated absences leading, where necessary, to prosecution.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and promotes pupils' learning and personal development well. The good quality of teaching over time is evident in the work in pupils' books and reflected in the data about progress. The learning observed in classrooms during the inspection confirmed the school's own evaluation of improved teaching.
- A strength of the school is that teachers and support staff have very effective working relationships with pupils and offer them lots of support and praise. This helps pupils, and particularly those who have limited experiences of the world around them, to grow in confidence.
- Staff have good subject knowledge of what is appropriate for the age and stage of development of the pupils. This was well illustrated when pupils in Year 1 made excellent progress in gymnastics because staff showed a video clip to illustrate technique and then demonstrated 'log rolls' well. This led to pupils improving their skills.
- The teaching and support of pupils in 'The Ark' is consistently good. Staff recognise the needs of the pupils well. When attending school assemblies, these pupils arrive first to give them time to settle calmly before other pupils arrive. Staff coax pupils to try activities they initially do not want to do. When working within a mainstream class, pupils are given very effective support, for example, to enable them to improve their gymnastic skills alongside their classmates.
- Staff work successfully to make activities stimulating for the pupils. They make good use of the local area for visits to the park or other places of interest. Adults also make effective use of the outdoor areas for all pupils and especially for the children in the Nursery.
- Staff explain things carefully to pupils. Pupils' books show that teachers clearly identify the purpose of activities so that pupils understand what they are expected to do and learn. Staff use questions well to encourage pupils to join in discussions, but with mixed success because some pupils lack confidence in their own abilities.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and experienced in working with pupils, as observed in phonic activities (the sounds linked to letters). Here, care is taken how to say a range of sounds, leading pupils to make good progress in learning about how to blend sounds together.
- Teachers regularly plan activities at different levels to take account of the range of abilities within each class. However, the sample of pupils' work shows that some activities do not really challenge the most-

able pupils on a regular basis.

- Staff have benefited from occasionally working with colleagues in a coaching capacity to share good practice. However, such activities have not been extensive and some staff say that they would like more opportunities to work with others to further improve their planning, teaching and learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills that are below what is typical for their age, particularly in the area of language and communication. Their physical development is stronger. Although children settle well and make good progress in all areas of their early development, most enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are still below what is typically seen. This is particularly the case in communication and language skills.
- In the 2014 national checks in Year 1, pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds linked to them was well below the national average. Since then the school, with the support of the local authority, has carried out a thorough review of how it teaches phonics skills. Staff have undertaken further training to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress through the programme of work. Data suggest that a higher proportion of pupils, close to the national average, are on line to achieve the expected target this year.
- In the Year 2 assessments in 2014, standards rose from the previous year, which in turn were an improvement on 2012. Data includes the standards attained by all pupils, including those in 'The Ark'. This impacts on pupils' overall attainment which is below average. Nevertheless, the rate of progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics is improving. All groups of pupils, including those in 'The Ark' are now making good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading. The school provides many opportunities for pupils of all ages to read regularly to an adult. Together with the improved teaching of phonics, this is making a positive impact on the progress made. As yet, however, individual records show that few read at home.
- Pupils now make good overall progress in writing. They have regular opportunities to write about the stories they have read, the visits they have made and what they have found out in other subjects. Their handwriting often develops well. However, few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in their writing by producing work which contains depth or detail.
- Pupils' speaking skills are very mixed. Some of the most-able pupils have a good vocabulary and are able to express their ideas well, but a considerable number of pupils struggle to explain themselves in much detail.
- Pupils now make good progress in mathematics and generally develop a secure understanding of numbers and calculations. However, they sometimes lack confidence in using what they already know to solve problems speedily and accurately.
- Staff and governors all recognise that White British boys do not attain as highly as other groups of pupils. Changes have been made to the curriculum and resources to make learning more interesting for boys. While this has met with some success, it remains a key priority for the school. Boys still do not attain as highly as girls, with the biggest gap in writing.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium were just over two terms behind their classmates in reading, over a term behind in writing and one term behind in mathematics. They were also a year or more behind other pupils nationally. School data indicate that attainment is set to rise this year. From their different starting points, disadvantaged pupils make good progress and achieve well. This is because the quality of support they receive is good and activities are well matched to their different abilities.
- The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress too. Many speak English as well as their home language and by Year 2 often outperform other groups of pupils.

- The most-able pupils make good overall progress, although occasionally work in pupils' books, including in mathematics, is too easy for some. This was also seen in Year 1 when some pupils finished their work quite quickly with little extension or challenge evident. Relatively few pupils are identified as the most able and achieve Level 3 in their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the school identifies their individual needs at an early stage and provides good quality support for them. This boosts their progress in lessons as well as in additional individual or small group activities. Work is well matched to their different abilities.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder in 'The Ark' make good progress in their personal development and their learning. For example, when finding out more about phonics, pupils enjoy using sound mats to identify different sounds and the letters that match them. Pupils use pictures to label parts of the body and like using the sensory room.
- Pupils develop healthy lifestyles through a range of physical education activities. Some staff have benefited from working with coaches to build their skills in teaching different sports.

The early years provision

is good

- Children have very mixed early learning experiences and understanding of the world beyond their local area. Some, especially boys, lack confidence and do not use a wide range of words to express their ideas. Skills in other areas of learning are also generally below what is typical. The Nursery provides opportunities to learn a wide range of skills so that children grow in confidence. Children from all backgrounds and of all abilities make good overall progress. A below average, but growing, proportion achieve a good level of development and are appropriately prepared for Year 1.
- Children develop strong working relationships with the staff. Children have positive attitudes to finding things out and many try hard to improve what they are doing. For example, in the Nursery, children in the 'digging pit' grew in understanding more about their environment through the prompting of the staff. Staff in the Nursery are all adept at drawing children into group activities. Children behave well and share equipment happily. For their age, they have a good understanding of how to stay safe. For example, when running around the school hall in physical education activities, Reception children are generally careful not to bump into anyone.
- Teaching in the early years is good. For example, staff in Reception had good skills in teaching children how to develop a 'story map' to represent their ideas and to use their knowledge of phonics to write labels for parts of The Gruffalo story. Through requests to 'talk to me about your creature', staff encouraged the children to use a more descriptive range of words. The planning of activities is generally good, although not entirely consistent.
- Leadership and management of the early years are effective. Staff have worked with senior leaders to develop provision, particularly in the Nursery, which is now a strength. The indoor and outdoor areas have been considerably improved. The teaching of phonics is helping children to make more rapid progress. Parents are very pleased with the quality of care and education provided for their children.

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	112737
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	462025

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	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Willoughby
Headteacher	Diane Reddish
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2013
Telephone number	01332 348314
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