

Brunswick School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112117
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	289179
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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 on roll	
School	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Barclay
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002
School address	Brunswick Road Penrith Cumbria CA11 7LX
Telephone number	01768 242156
Fax number	01768 242158

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brunswick is a smaller than average infant school, which draws its pupils from the surrounding market town. The vast majority of children are from a White British background with very few pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The headteacher has been in post for four weeks, following a term as acting headteacher. Attainment on entry is below average in all areas of learning.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. Pupils' personal development is good and care and support of pupils is very good. Pupils are happy. They feel safe and secure and consequently are keen to learn. Attendance is above average. As one parent observed: 'it was very hard for me to put my child into the care of people other than my immediate family ... the school has embraced my daughter and she loves attending the Nursery'. An overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with their children's progress and value the high quality of care.

Children arrive in Nursery with below average skills and communication and language skills that are well below average. Well organised teaching, which encourages and engages pupils, leads to good achievement throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage, the individual needs of children are speedily identified and very good progress is made by making certain that children acquire personal and language skills quickly. Throughout the school, very good relationships help pupils develop self-confidence and independence. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments show good overall achievement and broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Accurate assessment is systematically completed and is contributing well to the monitoring of pupils' progress. Although pupils receive sound guidance, which is allowing them to recognise how they can improve their work, some opportunities are missed to extend and challenge higher-attaining pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities, such as visits by theatre groups and the Salvation Army. Opportunities to develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills are restricted by a limited range of resources.

Against a background of a substantial budget deficit, the headteacher has demonstrated skill, determination and sensitivity in managing staff reductions whilst keeping staff spirits high. The school is rightly focused on achieving higher standards. The headteacher, staff and governors are ambitious and keen to learn from best practice. As a consequence of strengthened leadership and management, the school has a good capacity to move forward and is well placed to bring about further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the pace of lessons allows the higher attaining pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Improve resources for ICT to extend pupils' skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. From below average starting points with weaknesses in communication and language skill when they enter Nursery, pupils make good progress. Essential personal skills for a small number of pupils are developed quickly to give them confidence and independence. By the time they enter Year 1 most pupils are reaching standards typical for their age except in communication and language. Pupils continue to make good progress from when they enter Year 1. The results of the most recent Year 2 assessments were average in reading, slightly above average in mathematics and slightly below average in writing. Although standards have remained broadly average since the last inspection, the school now has a sharp focus on achievement in lessons which, coupled with more effective reading and writing strategies, are improving progress. Despite this, more-able pupils could do better in reaching

the higher Level 3. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good learning support and make good progress. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils behave well, enjoy school and have good attitudes to work. One pupil remarked: 'School is really fun because you always learn new things'. Pupils say that bullying is rare and is promptly dealt with. They are well aware of how to stay safe and know there is always an adult to turn to when needed. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They make considered healthy eating choices at lunchtime and value the opportunities for exercise in lessons and at break times. Literacy and numeracy skills are developing well and provide a good basis for pupils' future well-being.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities. They enjoy singing in care homes for the elderly, attending church for festivals and participating in dance events. Older pupils are proud of the responsibilities given to them. They really care for each other; for example, they show deep concern for pupils who reveal they have a problem by sitting on the 'friendship bench' in the playground and do their best to help them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Good quality teaching combined with skilled support makes certain that children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. The early identification of individual needs ensures that communication skills are developed with little delay. In most lessons, teaching includes well-timed tasks, work matched to need and questioning that is targeted to challenge and encourage pupils to think for themselves. In a few lessons, tasks are not always timed precisely enough or matched to individual need and consequently pace slows and questioning is less demanding. Improvements in the teaching of reading and writing are adding to the push to raise achievement further. Sound marking and guidance provides help to enable pupils to reflect on the quality of their learning and ways in which they can improve. Improving ICT provision is starting to enhance the quality of pupil work. Nevertheless, limited ICT teaching resources reduce opportunities to excite and inspire pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good curriculum underpinned by a strong emphasis on personal and social education. From the day they start in Nursery, the curriculum provides all children with the skills and attributes to help them to become good learners. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' enjoyment. One pupil said, 'I like history because you learn about people who helped to change the world.' Basic skills are consolidated and reading and writing are used well to support learning in other subjects. Provision for ICT is satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched well through the very good outdoor facilities; such as, the wild garden and by day visits and visitors. The visit to a Buddhist temple adds to pupils' understanding of other faiths. Clubs such as the mathematics club, run by a teacher and pupils from a local secondary school, broaden learning opportunities well. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. This is reflected in the

award of the local authority 'Kitemark'. Pupils make good progress because of coherent planning for all areas of learning and the proficient way staff foster independent learning. The outdoor facilities for Reception children are satisfactory, but the school is working to improve this aspect of provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for care, guidance and support is good. Pastoral care is very good. Guidance and support for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good so they make similar progress to other pupils. Robust procedures are now in place to monitor and track the progress of individual pupils. A range of strategies are helping pupils to know what they have to do to improve. Progressively, more challenging targets for pupils are being set by teachers to boost learning.

Procedures and practices for child protection and all aspects of health and safety are robust. There is a strong commitment to working with other agencies; for example, local Health Centre nurses 'drop in'. Arrangements for children starting Nursery are very good because of the successful induction procedures and the strong links forged with parents. As a result, children settle quickly and successfully into school routines.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and is determined to put improvements in place. This plays a crucial part in promoting a positive climate for learning in which all pupils thrive and enjoy their learning. The headteacher has very quickly identified school strengths and areas for improvement engendering commitment from an experienced, skilled and hardworking team of staff. Effective systems to evaluate and improve school performance are in use; for example, the procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching. The senior leadership team check all aspects of school life. Governance is satisfactory. The newly elected chair and rejuvenated governing body now systematically check performance and hold school to account. Consequently, self-evaluation is accurate and reliable. Currently, the school spends prudently and within budget to repay its deficit. Principles of best value are established and the school offers satisfactory value for money. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brunswick School, Cumbria, CA11 7LX

Thank you for the very friendly welcome to your school and for being so polite and helpful when you met us. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your teachers and joining you in lessons, in the dining hall and assembly.

What we most liked about your school:

- the determination shown by your headteacher to improve the school for your benefit
- the way you enjoy your lessons, are interested to learn and attend school every day
- your good behaviour and the way all the staff make sure your best work is recognised and rewarded
- the high quality of care and support all staff show to help you learn and listen to any worries and concerns you may have.

Your parents think that this is a good and improving school and we agree. Nevertheless, we think that you could do even better if:

- some of your work was more challenging so that you could make even more progress;
- the school had more computers to make learning more fun.

I hope that you will continue to work as hard as you can and enjoy your learning.

I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Petts

Lead inspector