

Brockley Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112510
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	289304
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	121
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Adam Morris-Docker
Headteacher	Mrs Erika Thornhill
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Clowne Road Shuttlewood Chesterfield Derbyshire S44 6AF
Telephone number	01246 823344
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and the number of pupils in each year group varies. Most pupils come from the local area, the prosperity of which has been adversely affected by the decline of coal mining and the recent closure of a large industrial plant. The school roll has recently fallen, in part due to families moving away from the area. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual times is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those with statements of special educational needs, are above average. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The current headteacher took over in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'There have been big improvements in the school in the last year', say members of the school council and they are right. Following a period of uncertainty, the headteacher, governors and staff are successfully making improvements to raise standards, and leadership and management are satisfactory. Through her keen and strong leadership, the headteacher has won the respect and trust of pupils, parents, staff and governors. Much is recently in place but evidence reflects the positive impact on pupils' progress of the good and improving practice implemented with the support of the local authority. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory as the roles and responsibilities of subject managers and other leaders have not yet been fully developed. The headteacher successfully ensures that there is regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is leading staff and governors in taking effective action to raise standards. The school rightly judges that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement is satisfactory. The standards and quality of education in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. At the end of Year 6, standards are average in mathematics and below average in English. The amount of progress pupils make is improving because of developments in teaching and learning. In particular, standards in boys' writing, which have been low, are rising. Although satisfactory, the rate of pupils' progress is still not fast enough to raise standards to meet the challenging targets the school has set, particularly for those pupils capable of reaching the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Pupils looked after by the local authority, and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress to others.

The quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Teachers' management of pupils is good. Their expectations are rising and the increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) is successfully promoting pupils' learning. However, pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the work set because teachers do not make enough use of the information they gather about what pupils already know and can do. As a result pupils are not always sufficiently clear as to how they can improve their work. Recent reviews of the curriculum have addressed important gaps in what is taught from year to year.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and behave well. Attendance has improved significantly this year and is now average. Through the school council, pupils make a good contribution to the community. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and know how to protect themselves from dangers. Pupils' development of key skills to promote their future learning and preparation for work is only satisfactory overall because of low standards in literacy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement, particularly for boys and more able pupils, by making greater use of information about what pupils know to support their next steps in learning.
- Improve pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

- Develop the roles and responsibilities of subject managers and other leaders in raising standards and improving the quality of provision.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When children start in the Nursery their skills and experiences are below average, with some having low communication and language skills. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Overall standards when they move to Year 1 are below average. Children make good gains in their personal and social development but the boys lag behind the girls particularly in their communication, language and literacy development and in their creative development. In the 2006 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils' results were average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing. In reading and writing, girls' results were average but the boys' results were low. Boys and girls reached similar levels in mathematics. Few pupils reached the higher levels. Overall, pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress.

Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 rose from exceptionally low in 2005 to below average in 2006 because of improvements in mathematics and science, but improvements in English were less marked. Standards were average in mathematics and below average in science and English. Overall achievement was average. The leadership's analysis of test papers shows that pupils, particularly boys, performed less well than expected in writing because they did not sufficiently understand what was required. Pupils only met the school's target at the higher Level 5 in mathematics. Girls made better progress than boys in English. In mathematics and science, boys and girls made similar progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy good relationships with adults and each other. They say that the school has become 'much more lively and interesting' in the last year and they feel involved in changes. Attendance is running at the highest level for the last five years because rigorous procedures to reduce unnecessary absences are working well and becoming embedded.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and a strong sense of justice. Behaviour is good and pupils say that bullying is not a problem. They are pleased that the 'playground pals' deal successfully with most minor disagreements and that staff respond promptly to any more serious incidents. Pupils successfully develop their understanding of different countries and cultures through, for example, discussing 'Fair Trade' initiatives.

Pupils work well together in pairs, small groups and teams. They take their responsibilities in class and around the school seriously, showing sensitivity and concern for others. Pupils make healthy choices in what they eat at break and dinner times. They take part enthusiastically in a daily programme of fitness activities and enjoy a wide range of group and team games at break times.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school correctly identifies that teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features. Through regular monitoring and support, practice is steadily improving. Crisp lesson starters get pupils thinking, and teachers share the objectives of each lesson. Lessons usually proceed at a good pace and involve a wide range of approaches that focus pupils' attention. Sometimes, teachers spend too long explaining what pupils are to do so that there is insufficient time for them to complete longer and sustained pieces of work. Teaching assistants give pupils the right amount of support, explaining points well. Teachers give suitable praise and encouragement, which boosts pupils' confidence as learners. Teachers' assessments are generally accurate but their marking of pupils' work lacks sufficient guidance to support improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recently improved planning reflects the latest national guidelines for literacy and numeracy and provides for the more systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding than was previously the case. A revised cycle of topics now addresses the needs of the mixed age classes. Planning is taking greater account of the different ways in which pupils learn and makes good use of learning resources, particularly visual and audio excerpts using the interactive white board, to support pupils' learning. Much is newly in place and has still to be reflected in higher standards.

The younger classes in particular make effective use of the outdoor areas to support their learning. The school provides a good range of sporting activities which are popular with pupils. However, there are more limited opportunities for pupils to extend their artistic or musical skills in out-of-school activities. Pupils enjoy termly theme weeks which provide time for more extensive topics involving design, drama and art work. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and say they have no hesitation in asking a member of staff for guidance. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate individual help and support to meet their targets. Links with outside agencies and partner schools are good. Parents say that they find the staff approachable and helpful. Risk assessments are regularly undertaken and staff are familiar with their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

There are manageable systems for tracking pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and in the Foundation Stage, but teachers' use of the information available is not yet rigorous enough in helping pupils to improve. Pupils know the targets that are set for their groups, but they do not have individual targets to help them focus their personal learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory. This is because many of the good measures to bring about improvements have only recently been put in place. The leadership is stable. Improvement planning focuses the school's priorities on raising achievement and standards. Plans identify suitable timescales, resources and success criteria. Members of the staff team enthusiastically share the headteacher's clear vision for the school's future development. They are working hard to develop and implement whole school policies and practices. Subject managers are starting to take greater responsibility for monitoring and improving standards. The school enjoys a high level of support from parents.

The governing body meets its statutory obligations and is supportive of the school. Governors have significantly improved their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in regard to achievement and standards, and teaching and learning. They are successfully developing their role in holding the school to account. Day-to-day routines are established and the school runs smoothly. The school's arrangements for managing the performance of teachers are satisfactory. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources and manages its budget effectively.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brockley Primary School, Shuttlewood, Chesterfield, S44 6AF

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited your school earlier this week. I enjoyed listening to you talk about your work in lessons and all the other things you do in school. I am delighted to hear that you enjoy coming to school and I particularly congratulate you on your improved attendance this year - well done! I am impressed by your good behaviour and your willingness to get on with each other and the staff. I am grateful to the school council for inviting me to attend their meeting and for telling me about how you are helping to improve the school. I am glad to hear that you are now eating more healthily and enjoying your daily fitness sessions.

The headteacher and the staff are working hard to make improvements and to help you do better in your work. Many of the changes made are still quite new but I can see that these are working. I am especially pleased to see improvement in your writing, especially from the boys. I saw some interesting plans for character descriptions and read some super starters when I visited lessons. I am asking the staff and governors to do three things in particular to help you improve further. Firstly, I would like your teachers to make more use of the information they collect about what you already know and can do to help them plan what you need to learn next. This is especially important for those of you learn more quickly than others and for those boys who have difficulty with their writing. Secondly, I think you should have a better understanding of what you need to do to improve your work. When they mark your work, teachers do not always give you enough ideas about how you could do better. Thirdly, I am suggesting that the staff become more involved in keeping a check on how well you are getting on and helping to make further improvements.

You all have an important part to play in helping the school meet these targets. Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead Inspector