



# Brockswood Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 117349  
**Local Authority** HERTFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 290804  
**Inspection date** 27 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alison Pangbourne

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Shenley Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Woodhall Farm Estate, Woodhall Farm Estate
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 7QH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 404000
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	137	<b>Fax number</b>	01442 404003
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Smith
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Lewis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 October 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves a mixed area comprised, mainly of council and housing association tenancies with some private housing. Most pupils come from White British families but just over a quarter are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few are at an early stage of learning English. Movement in and out of the area is significant. The attainment of most children on starting school is a little below average, particularly in language and literacy skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average as is the proportion who are entitled to free school meals. The school provides a breakfast club, after-school club and parenting classes.

## 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 school. Parents are very positive and say that their children can't wait to come in the mornings. The pupils endorse this, saying, 'It's a really good school and a nice place to be!' The pupils enjoy the excellent curriculum with its broad range of opportunities to visit interesting places and to meet visitors, who share their knowledge and experiences with them. The unusually wide variety of out-of-school clubs gives them the chance to develop many skills and contributes to their enjoyment of school. Their behaviour is good and they learn the importance of good manners. One of the 'pupil responsibilities' is to be kind and caring and respect other people, and they fulfil this admirably. Their personal development is good. They become confident and independent because they are given such good care and support. The older pupils, in particular, play a very important part in the smooth running of the school, taking on many responsibilities and airing their views. The excellent emphasis on eating healthily gives pupils a good understanding of a sensible diet that is unusual in such young children. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, those who are especially able and those who speak English as an additional language are given work at exactly the right level in order to make good progress. Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class and so most of them reach the expected standard at the beginning of Year 1, despite their underdeveloped literacy skills when they start school. Standards vary each year because the make-up of each very small year group can significantly affect standards. Nevertheless pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Standards have risen steadily over the last four years and are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. One of the reasons for this steady improvement, particularly in writing, is the way that the curriculum has been developed to interest the pupils and, in particular, to inspire them to write. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school and standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. This pattern has been maintained in recent years. In 2005, standards were exceptionally high. Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good, activities are closely matched to the needs of each pupil and their progress is tightly monitored. If pupils are finding it hard to keep up, programmes of extra help are provided to enable them to do as well as possible. A parent writes 'The school has worked with me to ensure that my child has the best help for her needs.' Although teachers continually assess what pupils know, the pupils themselves do not have enough opportunities to show teachers how much they have understood and what they are not sure about. The staff work very well as a team and know all the pupils very well, sharing information to ensure their well-being. The school's success is due to good leadership and management. The headteacher has been effective in leading a strong and stable team, who together contribute to the raising of standards. She uses her skills to secure any available funding for the benefit of the pupils. Value for money is good. Senior staff have an accurate view of the school and are continually looking for ways to improve. For example, they have introduced a new system this term for helping pupils to understand how to improve their writing. Pupils do not currently know precisely what to do to improve their mathematics and this could help to further raise standards.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Give pupils a better understanding of how to improve their performance in mathematics. - Help pupils to evaluate their own learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress in the Reception class because they are well taught. Staff place great emphasis on developing their language skills and give them interesting things to do. As a result, most have reached the goals expected for their age by the beginning of Year 1. Pupils' achievement is good through Years 1 to 6 and this is reflected in Year 2 assessments in 2006, where standards were above the national figure in reading, writing and mathematics. National tests for Year 6 in the same year were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Good standards of work were also seen in lessons.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Most pupils behave well and thoroughly enjoy school. A few pupils find it hard to meet the high standard of behaviour expected and distract others. Pupils attend regularly. They particularly enjoy choosing a healthy lunch where the choices are labelled according to their nutritional content. Consequently, even the youngest children know what makes a balanced diet. The older ones make an excellent contribution to the community by acting as a 'playground squad', proudly wearing their bibs so younger ones can identify who to go to for help or to play games. Pupils also carry out tasks at lunchtime such as answering the telephone in the school office. They develop a good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through the caring ethos and the outstanding opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. They know how to stay safe and their good basic skills equip them very well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well to the challenges set for them. One pupil said, 'The teachers make sure it is fun when you are learning' and this sums it up well. Throughout the school, teachers clearly explain what pupils are to learn but do not always give them enough opportunities to indicate how well they have understood. Teachers use questions well to include all pupils and develop their understanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 learned to make inferences from a text due to the very high quality of the teacher's questions. They also encourage pupils to

work together in small groups to develop their confidence. Good assessment means that staff quickly identify those who need extra help.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum offers a much richer range of opportunities than many schools. The exciting things on offer really encourage the pupils to learn and contribute positively to standards. Pupils learn to play the recorder, violin, guitar and keyboard, French is taught to the older ones and more able pupils learn Latin. Regular workshops on dance, music, technology and recycling, for example, broaden the pupils' skills and understanding on a wide range of topics. Visits to places such as the House of Commons and close links with the Historical Association give them a wealth of valuable experiences. The large number of out-of-school activities makes learning interesting and encourages skills such as rock and pop dance and an understanding of Asian culture.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's welcoming atmosphere and concern for individuals means that the pupils and their parents feel valued. The youngest children and other newcomers are helped to settle very quickly and get to know their teachers. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and staff are well trained. Pupils' progress is thoroughly tracked and action is taken if they are lagging behind. Very effective support is given to pupils who find it hard to learn and the school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that their needs are met. Pupils know their targets for improvement in writing and these are helping to raise standards. However, they do not yet have targets for mathematics, so their understanding of how to improve is weaker.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a tangible sense of team spirit amongst teachers, support staff and governors. All are committed to improvement. Staff speak highly of the opportunities they have to develop their skills for the benefit of the pupils. The headteacher has successfully gained funding to improve many aspects of the school. For example, violin tuition and Latin for the more able. All staff in this small school fulfil their developing management roles effectively, having a good understanding of strengths and areas for development in their subjects. This contributes to the good standards and achievement. The governors are strong supporters of the school. They question new initiatives to ensure they provide good value for money. More training opportunities could be provided to help all governors fulfil their roles even more successfully. Because of the strong teamwork shown by all at the school, it is in a strong position to continue improving.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

28 September 2006 Dear Children Brockswood Primary School, Shenley Road, Woodhall Farm Estate, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. HP2 7QH Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. I would like to tell you what I liked best. You told me that you go to a good school and I agree with you. I thought that your behaviour was good and that you played nicely with your friends. I thought that the 'playground squad' do a very good job! You told me that the cook made very healthy food for you and I agree! It was good to see how well you understand what to choose. You go to lots of interesting places and have lots of visitors to help you learn new things. I learned a lot about recycling from your workshop and I expect you did too! All the grown-ups look after you well and help you to learn. If you find learning hard or are just learning to speak English you get lots of help. Your families know that you go to a good school. I saw your targets for writing on your classroom walls and it was good to see that some of you already know what you have to do to improve. I have asked your teachers to let you have targets for mathematics as well. I have also asked them to give you more chances to show them what you understand so that they can give you more help if you need it. You can help by continuing to try as hard as you can to do your best and to think about your targets when you are doing your work. I hope you carry on enjoying your time at Brockswood Primary School and do well in your next school. Best wishes Alison Pangbourne Lead inspector