

Brookland Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118664
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291205
Inspection date	15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vivienne Cubbon
Headteacher	Sue Hill
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	Brookland Romney Marsh TN29 9QR
Telephone number	01797 344317
Fax number	01797 344776

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school with four classes situated in the small village of Brookland, with several pupils attending from further afield. Pupils come into the school with a wide range of skills and abilities, which vary from year to year but, taken collectively, are broadly at the level expected. All pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Whilst the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate, it has a number of positive features. Care and support for pupils' pastoral needs are good and this results in the pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour. Parents and pupils recognise these strengths and parents comment that their children feel happy and secure and grow in confidence. They are right; the school looks after the pupils well. Older pupils have mature attitudes to learning, take their responsibilities seriously and look out for the younger pupils. Relationships at playtimes are good and pupils typically play games together or run around in the well-kept outside areas. They say they feel very safe. Attendance is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, and action taken by the school to improve this has not been effective enough. Overall, care, guidance and support and pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory.

Despite these positive aspects, there are significant weaknesses in provision. Pupils do not reach high enough standards and make insufficient progress because of weaknesses in teaching and leadership and management. These areas are inadequate. Pupils progress satisfactorily in Reception and do well in Years 1 and 2. However, progress from this point is inadequate, especially in mathematics and science, and pupils leave with below-average standards. The progress that pupils make across Years 3 to 6 has declined steadily for the past three years. The school's targets for Year 6 pupils are not sufficiently challenging because they do not take sufficient account of starting points in Year 2. These were not met in 2006 in mathematics. The main problems arise from weaknesses in the school's self-evaluation. There is very limited analysis of performance information and, as a result, improvement planning is not sufficiently rigorous or focused on current priorities. Leaders are not setting a clear enough direction to tackle these weaknesses. Their view on how well the school is doing is too generous.

Leaders have had to cope with some staffing difficulties which have adversely affected pupils' learning. However, teaching is not meeting the needs of too many pupils. In too many lessons, work is not sufficiently challenging and the pace of learning too slow. Overall, these weaknesses result in pupils not adequately developing the skills and abilities they need when they leave the school.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are strengths in the extra-curricular activities provided, which are much appreciated by the pupils. Mathematical problem solving and investigation are inadequately developed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the evaluation of performance information so that planning for improvement is based on a rigorous and up-to-date analysis of pupils' progress.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching so that strengths can be shared effectively and weaknesses identified and remedied.
- Match teaching and learning activities to the individual needs of pupils so that they do as well as they should.

- Apply more rigorous procedures to raise attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Children come into the school at the levels expected across most areas of learning. However, their speaking and listening and personal and social skills are above average. They enter Year 1 with average standards.

The results of the end of Key Stage 1 national tests in 2006 were unusually high and were well above average. Results in writing were particularly high and those in reading and mathematics were above average. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making good progress in English.

The end of Key Stage 2 test results were average in 2005 and below average in 2006, when standards in English were broadly average, but they were well below average in mathematics and science. Over half of the pupils in Year 6 did not achieve well enough and made poor progress in mathematics and science. Progress in English is currently satisfactory, but it remains inadequate in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties make good gains in developing early reading skills, but are not making sufficient progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' understanding of the need for physical activity and being healthy is good. They enjoy being active at playtimes and eating healthy snacks. They are very clear that they are not allowed fizzy drinks because they can be unhealthy. There are very few instances of anti-social behaviour in the playground and pupils say that behaviour is good. Any over-boisterousness is quickly dealt with by the good levels of supervision. Pupils say they particularly enjoy social aspects of school life and think their teachers are kind. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils listen to each other carefully and respect different views and opinions. They have a keen awareness of personal safety; they look out for each other, and have a good understanding of possible dangers outside school and when crossing the roads. Pupils have a good understanding of the needs of others in the community and actively raise money. The school council representatives gather the views of the pupils to put forward at meetings. Older pupils have very good social and personal skills but have not developed their academic skills and abilities sufficiently well to prepare them for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Inadequate teaching that fails to meet the older pupils' needs is the main cause of pupils' underachievement. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, and lessons and activities are well organised. In some classes, teachers' expectations are high and the work set is challenging, as seen when Year 2 pupils converted analogue to digital time.

Weaknesses in the use of assessment and planning result in slow learning and work that is not sufficiently demanding. Teachers are not making their expectations clear enough. For example, in writing, more-able pupils were asked to write more sentences rather than improve specific aspects of the writing content. In mathematics, tasks such as completing pages of very similar

sums were too repetitive. This results in pupils' weaknesses when applying their understanding to different problems. Pupils' attainment from Year 2 is not being built on sufficiently well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum serves the needs of different pupils adequately but there are too few opportunities provided for the pupils to apply their problem-solving and investigation skills in mathematics.

Curricular provision in Reception has an appropriate mix of structured and independent activities which enable the children to make a successful start to acquiring literacy and numeracy skills.

The recent change to include more drama is enlivening lessons and helping to strengthen pupils' creative writing. Pupils particularly enjoyed the visit to the theatre to see 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and say that good preparation enabled them to understand the plot and characters. Enrichment of the curriculum through visits and visitors coming into the school is good.

After-school clubs offer a wide range of activities and are well attended. The residential visit was particularly successful and one pupil commented that 'it was so exciting!' The pupils value the good opportunities to learn and speak French.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides strong support for pupils' personal needs because the pupils are well known to staff as individuals. Younger pupils quickly settle into the school. Staff treat the pupils with respect and this results in a significant level of trust between the adults and pupils. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet requirements. The school uses the help of external agencies to follow up on attendance; however, this remains unsatisfactory, partly because several pupils go on holiday in term-time and partly because non-attendance has not been challenged with sufficient rigour by the school's leaders. The identification and support for pupils with specific disabilities are good.

The academic support pupils are given is satisfactory. Pupils use information from lessons and marking to identify targets for improvement and on a few occasions assess each other's work. Most of these targets are specific enough to help them improve but a few are too general.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leaders have not been effective in tackling and rectifying the underachievement of the older pupils. A major problem is the lack of rigour in evaluating how well the school is doing. Although leaders know the levels at which individual pupils work, pupils' progress has not been sufficiently well analysed. Leaders are insufficiently sure about what the school's key priorities are. The decline in progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6 and lack of progress in addressing unsatisfactory attendance shows that actions taken have not been effective and the school is not showing the necessary capacity to improve.

Staff co-operate well together and are willing to take on new ideas. Monitoring of teaching is in place; however, evaluation is not sufficiently robust. Weaknesses are not followed up sufficiently well and, as a result, support provided to improve teaching has not been effective.

Governors are very supportive and regularly visit the school but they do not have a clear understanding of the progress made by the pupils or the standards being reached. They have not challenged leaders in the school sufficiently about the decline in progress.

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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 March 2007

Dear Pupils,

Brookland Church of England Primary School, Brookland, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9QR

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were very impressed with how open and friendly you were. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. We think your school looks after you well but is not ensuring that you to make the progress you are capable of by the time you leave.

What we most liked about your school

- The school provides well for your personal needs and ensures that you are safe.
- You have good attitudes, work hard and behave well.
- Relationships are good with parents and throughout the school.
- You are making good progress in Years 1 and 2 in English.
- There are good opportunities for you to extend learning after school and on trips and visits.
- You have a good understanding about how to stay healthy.

We found that improvements are needed and have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

- Improving how well they judge the school's strengths and weaknesses so that they become better at planning and improving on areas that are not good enough.
- Making sure the teachers have better information about how they can improve their work.
- Making sure that the work given to you meets your needs and is not too easy or too difficult.
- Improving your attendance.

All the adults in school will be working hard to make the school better. To help you, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors will visit regularly to check the progress you are making. You can help by making sure that you are at school every day whenever possible.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector