



Brooklands School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125472
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 293272
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Greg Sorrell

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

Type of school	Special	School address	27 Wray Park Road
School category	Community special		Reigate
Age range of pupils	2–11		RH2 0DF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01737 249941
Number on roll (school)	83	Fax number	01737 242017
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Celia Benson
		Headteacher	Mrs Susan Wakenell
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Brooklands admits pupils who have statements of special educational needs apart from some in the Foundation Stage who are undergoing assessment. The statements of special education needs relate to severe learning difficulties and additional needs include autistic spectrum (ASD) 30% and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) 20%. The majority of pupils also have a range of additional needs that may include, language, medical and physical difficulties.

The vast majority of pupils have White British heritage. It is currently working towards the Healthy Schools Award and was recently be re-awarded Investor in People status. The school is part of a county special schools confederation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Brooklands School is outstanding. It is very effective in enabling the children in Early Years and pupils in the main school to achieve very well academically and make excellent progress in their personal development and independence. All learners, regardless of their special educational need, are well prepared for their next stage of education.

The pupils' achievements are also due to the outstanding quality of teaching and learning. Typically, teachers and support staff employ a range of teaching styles to meet the well identified needs of individuals. Staff are very skilled in promoting effective communication using a wide range of methods. Regular assessment of learning ensures that maximum opportunities are provided for success. Relationships amongst staff and with pupils are extremely strong and supportive. The outstanding curriculum recognises the increasingly complex needs of the pupils and is suitably balanced to develop their academic abilities and independent life skills.

The pupils' joyous expressions on arrival at school confirm the school's success in delivering its declared mission, 'to be an excellent school where enjoyment is central to learning'. Parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school. They endorse the view that their children are safe and happy to be at school as their good attendance record shows. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. One parent wrote, 'My only complaint is that my child cannot stay at this school until she is 19!' Where appropriate, the pupils are given responsibilities to help their class run smoothly. They also fund-raise for others and invite members of their community to share experiences such as the school productions.

The care, guidance and support provided by all school staff and other agencies are outstanding and ensure the pupils are appropriately challenged in a safe, secure environment where their well-being is safeguarded. Respect for the pupils' wishes and their dignity in their personal care are strong features of daily life at school.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Governors are active in school life and play an increasingly effective role as the school's critical friend. The headteacher uses a range of methods to gain an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Whilst a wide range of staff and governors are involved in planning for improvement, the headteacher rightly recognises the need to increase their involvement in checking on how well the school is doing. Since the last inspection the school has continued to thrive and is well placed to continue its excellent work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that staff and governors are fully involved in evaluating the school's effectiveness.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The pupils' achievements are outstanding. In the Nursery and Reception classes, where the range of ability is widest, all children achieve well in relation to their capabilities and some leave for mainstream education following comprehensive assessments. In Years 1 to 6, the pupils achieve the challenging targets set for them in their individual education plans. These plans also include targets for pupils' development of communication skills and independence as well as wider academic performance. Personal development is a particular strength with all pupils achieving very well. Their achievement is due to outstanding teaching, leadership and management, including additional specialist input from therapists.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They show significant gains in confidence and independence. Foundation stage children show a readiness for starting the first key stage whether at Brooklands or in mainstream education.

Pupils' expressions on arrival indicate they are happy to be there, as parents' views confirm. The pupils' attendance is excellent and any absences are invariably due to medical reasons. The pupils' behaviour is excellent even when those with challenging behaviours present occasional difficulties. At these times, and all others, the pupils respond very well to the wide range of activities provided.

Relationships amongst pupils are very good. They frequently show concern for the welfare of other and share pleasure in their successes, as shown by spontaneous applause when five merit stars are achieved for good work. Particular regard is shown towards those peers who have significant medical needs and care is taken when passing in corridors.

The pupils indicate preferences in activities and choices of food and, occasionally, some select healthier options at lunch-time. In lessons, they clearly enjoy physical activities, including the time when classes of differing abilities meet for art, dance and drama. They make a good contribution to both the school and the local community. For instance, some pupils act as helpers and the local community and parents enjoy attending pupils' events and performances. Overall, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop a good sense of belonging in their community and a strong awareness of other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent and has many strengths, one of these being the ability of all staff to communicate effectively with the pupils. This is ensured by clear speech and careful listening as well use of alternative methods. Staff possess considerable skill in the use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), signing and symbols, as well as understanding pupils' facial expressions and gestures. This expertise is essential in encouraging all pupils to exercise choice, for example in deciding which musical instrument to use. Staff go to considerable lengths to take account of the pupils' wishes and their preferred learning styles are recorded and readily available.

Close attention is given to learners' individual targets in lessons and this ensures that lessons are relevant. Some teaching observed was outstanding, as a result of high expectations, excellent deployment of staff and a very close monitoring of responses to provide the right pace of learning. The pupils' learning is enhanced by regular and prompt feedback. For example, they are frequently praised for 'good listening' and 'good looking', when paying attention to staff.

Relationships between teachers and teaching assistants are very strong. There are many examples of good practice that include shared planning, team teaching and shared assessment. Therapists, medical staff, visiting teachers and volunteers also make valuable contributions to the quality of provision.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very effective in meeting the wide range of need in the school. Appropriate emphasis is given to the national curriculum and ensuring relevance through communication, literacy and numeracy alongside the pupils' personal, social and physical development. Pupils with additional complex learning needs access the curriculum through sensory experiences. The outdoor play areas afford a stimulating environment for sensory and creative play. Regular opportunities are provided to enable pupils to work outside their age-group, when their abilities indicate they should, and a high priority is given to including all pupils irrespective of ability. As a result of careful planning, the pupils receive appropriate therapies which further increase their ability to access the curriculum. The combined experience of lessons and therapy prepares them well for their next stage of education: this is equally true for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, advice and guidance to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare is excellent. The school places a very high value on ensuring all learners receive the best possible provision and pupils are assisted in achieving maximum independence with appropriate support. All staff undergo regular training to enable them to manage pupils' needs effectively; staff new to the school have a well planned induction programme to promote consistency. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for and they appreciate the commitment shown by staff. The staff remain vigilant at all times to ensure a safe environment and any incidents are properly recorded and followed up.

The pupils' views are sought although the school has recognised that more work can be done in this respect. Links with other agencies, including social services, speech and language therapists, school nurse, occupational therapists and physiotherapists are very well established so that additional support and guidance is provided as required.

Communication between parents, carers and staff, including the regular newsletter giving news of 'the sign of the week', is effective in ensuring everyone is fully informed about school life, welfare and progress. Individual education plans contain realistic targets that enable the pupils to achieve success. Regular reviews of the pupils' complex needs result in appropriate action, enabling them to make excellent progress in becoming as independent as possible. The school provides comprehensive reports for all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management and is very well supported by her deputy headteacher and leadership team. Together they have maintained the high standards identified in previous inspections and are well placed to improve further. The headteacher and deputy monitor the quality of provision very closely. For example, lessons are videoed and analysed in detail, with all staff receiving feedback about their performance.

School development planning is comprehensive and involves all staff annually. Presently, gathering evidence for self-evaluation is primarily undertaken by the headteacher who acknowledges the need to involve other managers and governors more fully in these processes. Governors provide good support for the school and their role in self-evaluation is developing, for example, they are attached to classes and make termly visits to observe specific subjects. They also possess highly relevant skills in personnel and finance that are put to good use by the school.

The school has very good systems to develop the skills of all staff including those new to the school. Particularly effective is the promotion of professional development for teachers and teaching assistants for the benefit of both staff and pupils.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

The quality of provision

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

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Thank you for helping me find my way around your school and for giving me such a warm welcome. It gives me great pleasure to say that you go to an outstanding school! I say this for lots of reasons. Mrs. Wakenell leads the staff very well and all the staff work very hard for you. The teachers and teaching assistants make sure that your lessons help you to learn in lots of different ways. They provide you with choices and ways of expressing these. You make excellent progress in your reading, writing and mathematics as well becoming more confident and able to look after yourselves. You get on well with the staff and do your very best to see that everyone can get on and learn in class. When any boy or girl has a problem I can see that they get help from an adult they know. You also have an excellent range of physical activities to help you stay strong, fit and healthy. These include your work at the swimming pool, where you gain confidence in water, and also in the hall where you play Boccia, dance and practise trampolining. When I was observing you doing these activities and in your classes I could see how much you enjoyed what you were learning!

Mrs Wakenell is very well supported by everyone when planning for what the school will do in the future. To improve even more, I'm asking all managers and governors to be more closely involved in checking how good the school is now.

I wish you lots of luck in the future and thank you once again for allowing me to see just how well you are doing.

Greg Sorrell

Lead Inspector