

Brook Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134961
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	300247
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Ellis HMI

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	
School	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonathon Hourigan
Headteacher	Ms Rebecca Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sigdon Road Hackney London E8 1AS
Telephone number	020 7254 4090
Fax number	020 7254 1494

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brook is large primary school with a nursery. It serves an area of Hackney which has high socio-economic deprivation and around half the pupils come from homes experiencing economic hardship. Most pupils come from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds. There is high pupil mobility and around one in five pupils come from refugee or asylum seeking families. Around one in three pupils are entitled to free school meals. One in three pupils speak English as a second language and around one in five are at the early stages of learning English. The school opened in March 2005 as part of the Fresh Start initiative and replaced a failing school on the same site. A programme of refurbishment has recently been completed and the design for the new entrance and Mirador was a winner in the 2006 Hackney Design Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Brook is a happy and inclusive community where every pupil is valued and well cared for. It provides a satisfactory quality of education and has several good features. Standards, although low, are rising and most pupils, regardless of their background or ability, make at least satisfactory progress and an increasing proportion achieve challenging targets. It is an improving school, but its good senior leadership team are not complacent and recognise that, although some aspects of the school's work are very good, there remain areas for development.

Pupils join the school with standards that are well below average overall. Around one fifth of the pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and despite the good efforts of the teachers and suitable intervention programmes this limits the early progress that some pupils make. Weaknesses in provision in the predecessor school have meant that many older pupils have ground to make up. This has resulted in the attainment of many pupils being below the standards expected for their ages.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and this is demonstrated by their good behaviour, positive attitudes in the classroom and good attendance. They say that they feel safe and well cared for and demonstrate that they understand the need to develop a healthy lifestyle. The older pupils develop good personal qualities that make them good role models for younger children and prepare them for the next steps in their education.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it is broad and balanced and meets the needs of most pupils. The school has recognised that it needs to be better and has planned to introduce a new curriculum in September. Teaching is good and now enables many pupils to achieve well in lessons and reach their targets. In a few lessons the work is not always precisely matched to the needs and prior attainment of a small minority of pupils, often including the most able. In the best lessons pupils are enabled to assess their own progress towards the learning objective, but this is not a common feature of all lessons. Senior leaders recognize that it is important to continue to develop consistently good or better teaching throughout the school so that improvement can be sustained. Pastoral care is good and pupils say that they are well supported and know who to turn to if they have a problem. Parents are supportive and most say that their children enjoy school, feel safe and are enabled to make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. Those responsible for leading and managing the school have a clear picture of its strengths and areas for development. The school has good data on most aspects of its work but this is not organised as well as it might be. This makes it more difficult for managers to get a quick and accurate picture of an individual pupil's progress and development. The positive impact of the actions taken to address previous weaknesses and the overall progress made since the school opened demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Most children make good progress in most of the areas of learning and particularly in their personal development. They enjoy being at school and most children co-operate well with others and they have good relationships with the adults who care for them. Teaching is good and children experience a good mix of teacher led and self-chosen activities. There are good systems and procedures to keep children safe. Children are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and say that they enjoy taking exercise. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and the Foundation Stage is well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve pupils more actively in assessing their own learning.
- Develop the use of assessment information to provide a better match of tasks to the pupils' needs and prior attainment.
- Raise expectations further and increase the level of challenge, particularly for the most able.
- Develop and refine the systems for recording pupils' progress so as to improve senior managers' capacity to analyse it efficiently.

A small proportion of 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 and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the Nursery with very poor language and communication skills and many have limited social skills. Despite making good progress in the nursery and reception classes many do not achieve the standards expected for five year olds by the start of Year 1 because of their low starting points.

Standards overall in Key Stage 1 are rising. Pupils' results in the Year 2 national tests were below average in 2006, although results in writing and mathematics were a significant improvement compared to the previous year. Current attainment in Year 2 shows improved standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Year 6 test results were also an improvement on the previous year but in 2006, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average and very few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in any subject. The school has identified that these pupils made relatively poor progress because of a legacy of previous poor teaching which resulted in gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and other groups who have additional needs, make similar progress to other pupils in the school because of the effective support they receive.

Inspection evidence and the school's own tracking data shows that standards are rising and pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. Achievement in the other years is satisfactory. Because of the legacy of previous underachievement and despite their recent good progress resulting from the good teaching they now receive, many pupils are working below the level appropriate for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance rates are now above average due to firm actions taken by the school. This approach is now being used to lower the number of unauthorised absences, which are above average. The number of fixed term exclusions increased when the school introduced higher expectations for behaviour. Although still high, this number has decreased and the pupils' behaviour in lessons, when moving around the school and in the playground is good. Pupils' moral development is good and they show a good understanding of right and wrong and follow school rules. Their social development is good. Most pupils are self confident and well motivated. From a young age they work and share well

with others. Older pupils are enthusiastic when tasks are stimulating and they respond well when given responsibility.

Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. They are developing the skills of reflecting upon their learning but assemblies do not always offer an opportunity for spiritual reflection. Pupils' cultural development is good and they recognise, respect and celebrate the many differing cultures and backgrounds within the school community.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles such as the need to exercise and most have at least two hours physical education a week. They identify that their lunch time food is healthy, as it is low in fat and salads are provided. Pupils feel safe and secure, recognising potential dangers such as from the internet. They enjoy their lessons and one Year 5 boy stated 'this school is brilliant'. Although standards in basic literacy and numeracy skills are not as high as they could be pupils are well prepared for future economic well being through the many effective practices that raise their expectations, confidence and experience such as when needing to 'apply' for the position of Peer tutors.

Through the school council pupils express their opinions and learn about citizenship. Members identify that they have influenced the school on many issues helping to make the school a pleasant place for pupils, such as developing the role of the prefects and suggesting comfortable reading areas in each classroom. As one pupil stated 'the school council are the voice of their classes'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Some lessons are outstanding and none unsatisfactory. Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are a major factor in the recent rise in standards. Teachers have clear expectations of how pupils will behave and learn and the result of this is classrooms having a purposeful learning atmosphere. Teachers are following the guidance of senior leaders in working well to meet the need for most pupils to develop their spoken English. They did this in many of the lessons seen by giving pupils opportunities to engage in 'partner talk'. Improvements to the systems for assessing pupils' progress have contributed to better teaching and learning, but, as the school's own evaluation shows, teachers do not always make enough use of information about how well pupils are learning to create tasks that challenge pupils of different abilities, including those capable of higher attainment. There is inconsistency in the extent to which appropriate demands are made on pupils. The school acknowledges the need to continue to raise expectations and increase the level of challenge, especially for more able pupils.

The teaching assistants give skilled support which enhances the learning of pupils. The school has made great strides forward in developing the effectiveness of the systems for assessing and recording the academic progress made by pupils. The arrangements are now contributing effectively to identifying underachievement and raising standards. The school has identified through self evaluation the need to continue to involve pupils more in assessing their learning. Inspection evidence gained through observing lessons supports this judgement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although the school is still in the process of developing the range of experiences and activities it provides for pupils, the curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides excellent opportunities for children to develop independence. There is evidence that the recent strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is beginning to raise standards. A positive feature of the provision is the planning to reflect the heritage of pupils, for example, in 'Black History month' and 'Refugee week'. Great importance is placed on the development of personal, social and emotional skills of pupils and as a result of the good arrangements, pupils feel more able to express their feelings. The school has identified the need to improve the planning for children moving from the Foundation Stage into Year 1. Pupils benefit significantly from the productive links with local businesses, one of which provide staff to listen to them read and also arrange visits, such as one to the Tate Gallery. These develop pupils' motivation to write and learn to speak English well. A 'supported reading' programme, involving many parent volunteers who have been trained by the school to support groups of pupils, has contributed well to developing pupils' reading skills and their positive attitudes to books.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The monitoring of pupils' attendance and safety is of a high standard and child protection procedures are complied with. External agencies are used extensively to provide good support for pupils' emotional, behavioural and learning needs. Pupils are counselled on their choice of secondary education. Teachers and support staff are vigilant of their pupils needs with systems in place to monitor and support the most vulnerable in the school community. Before school breakfast clubs and after school clubs contribute to the good care the school provides.

Regular meetings between senior leaders and teachers about the progress made by each pupil are a strong feature of the provision. As a result of these arrangements, teachers are beginning to take more responsibility for analysing information about how well pupils are learning. They set short term targets for pupils to achieve over the course of several weeks, but pupils are not involved sufficiently in deciding what they should be.

The school works well to ensure that all pupils are included in its activities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively, resulting in them making at least satisfactory progress in lessons. Sound provision for pupils who do not speak English at home helps them to achieve satisfactorily. A strong feature in this area is the contribution made by the Language Acquisition teacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her senior team have a clear focus on promoting personal development and raising standards. They have been successful in fostering a very inclusive ethos throughout the school. Senior leaders monitor the work of the school and analyse information well so that they have a clear picture of the school's strengths

and areas for improvement. However, information about pupils' progress and development is held in different forms and in different places which makes analysis of the data more difficult than it might be. The school has begun to implement a computer based system to bring this information together. Rigorous monitoring of teaching, combined with coaching and good professional development opportunities, have improved the quality of teaching which in turn has led to improvements to learning and pupils' achievement. Following effective self-evaluation the school has recently introduced a team based structure for management which has created greater capacity and accountability. However, because this change is relatively recent not all roles are fully developed. The school consults widely with stakeholders and takes their views in to account when planning actions and evaluating their impact. Good partnerships have been developed with parents and with the local community. Governors are well informed and provide a suitable balance of challenge and support. The progress made in implementing actions for improvement and evaluating their impact demonstrates a clear capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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?	3
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	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	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

26 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brook Community Primary School, London, E8 1AS

Thank you for making us feel so welcome and helping us with our inspection, and a special thank you to the school council and those of you who spoke to us about your school and the work that you were doing. I particularly enjoyed the 'Wild Things' assembly.

We think that some of the things that the school does are good and some things could be a bit better, so we have given the school a satisfactory grade.

We saw how well you behave and how well you look after each other. You told us that you enjoy being at school and feel safe and well looked after. You said that you like eating healthy food and enjoy the opportunities you get to take exercise. Most of you are keen to learn and this helps you make satisfactory progress. Some of you work even harder and make good progress.

The people who have responsibility for making decisions about your school know it very well and have many good ideas about how it can be made even better.

We think the main things that the school needs to do are;

- To get you to think a bit more about how well you are doing and what you can do to improve your work.
- To make sure that the tasks you are given are not too easy or too difficult so that you can learn as well as possible.
- To expect a bit more from you so that by the time you leave the school you know as much or more than other children who are your age.
- Change the way that information about you is recorded so that it is easy to find out exactly how well you are doing.

You can help by supporting each other and always trying to do your best.

We really enjoyed our two days at your school and look forward to hearing about your future successes.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis Her Majesty's Inspector