

Brookhouse Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119344
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	301950
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Karen Ling 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Shaukat Hussain
Headteacher	Mrs Jacquelyn Young
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2003
School address	Troy Street Blackburn Lancashire BB1 6NY
Telephone number	01254 666050
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is an average sized school, which operates in challenging circumstances. The area it serves has high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Virtually all pupils are of Asian origin and have English as an additional language (EAL). A significant number of pupils are at early stages of English language acquisition. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils who have statements for special educational needs is well above the national average. Approximately one third of pupils who attend the school are entitled to a free school meal. The school was awarded the ArtsMark Accreditation and Eco Award in 2006. It has also achieved Investors in People status.

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 where pupils are well cared for by a dedicated staff team. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' achievement and have made huge efforts to raise the standard of work across the school. Good pastoral care and positive relationships support pupils' personal development. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show positive attitudes towards work. Their behaviour is exemplary. They adopt healthy lifestyles and develop a good awareness of safe practices. Safeguarding policies are in place to protect pupils and promote their well-being.

Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that overall are well below average in areas of communication, language and literacy. Provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is satisfactory with good features and has improved since the last inspection. It provides pupils with a sound basis for future learning. The classroom is well resourced and organised. There is an appropriate balance of adult directed and self-chosen activities. Children show developing confidence as they make choices from the variety of activities. However, some activities are overly adult-directed and do not provide sufficient challenge. At times, advantage is not taken of adult support to maximize speaking and listening opportunities for children; such as talking about their own experiences, what they know and can do.

Pupils make steady progress during Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are well below the national average. Cohorts vary from year to year and this is reflected in how well pupils do in literacy and mathematics. Results for 2006 show a slight improvement in reading and writing. The introduction of targets and careful monitoring of what pupils can do has led to this improvement in the standard of pupils' writing. There is a clear structure to the teaching of reading and daily practice of early reading skills is helping pupils to grasp the language more quickly than in previous years. There was a dip in performance in mathematics. Intensive support is now in place for mathematics and is having a positive impact as evidenced in the standard of work seen during the inspection. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress. Standards are satisfactory and have been steadily rising over the past three years.

Teaching and learning are good overall. A concerted effort on everyone's part has resulted in a higher proportion of good lessons across the school. Information about what pupils know and can do is used well most of the time to help move pupils on in their learning. Pupils know how well they are doing, how to improve their work and what they must do to move on to the next level. Pupils also know how to check their own work carefully. However, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. The school is aware of this and has begun to address this issue.

The curriculum is good. The number of awards and certificates achieved by the school reflect the breadth of curricular activities pupils participate in. They join with neighbouring schools in sport tournaments and, as a result, develop links which help raise their awareness of different cultures and backgrounds.

The school is well led and managers have acted decisively to improve standards. They have high expectations of staff and pupils and the hard work and determination of all staff is bearing fruit. Self-evaluation is accurate and appropriate action is being taken to address where further work needs to be done. Good progress has been made in tackling the issues raised at the last inspection. There is good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop activities in the Foundation Stage so that all pupils:
- are challenged and have good opportunities to develop their own ideas
- have frequent opportunities to engage in conversation with adults, talk about their own experiences and what they know and can do.
- Develop strategies to raise the achievement of more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are average. Pupils make good strides in their learning over time and standards are rising as a result of improved teaching and learning. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below average overall but well below average in areas of communication, language and literacy. All pupils have EAL. They make satisfactory progress overall during their time in Reception class, though progress in personal, social and emotional development is good. This prepares them well for Key Stage 1 and they enter Year 1 with positive attitudes towards learning. Results since the last inspection have been variable but overall show that by the end of Year 2 standards are well below average. However, work seen during the inspection shows that pupils achieve soundly and the standard of work is improving, particularly in literacy and numeracy. At Key Stage 2, standards have been below average but have risen steadily over the past three years. In 2006, achievement in English, mathematics and science was particularly good and standards were in line with the national average. Many pupils achieved Level 4 and some achieved the higher Level 5. This represents significant improvement and very good progress from low starting points. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have also improved. Information provided by the school indicates further improvement this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features. Good personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage enables pupils to settle easily into school life. From this point, pupils grow in confidence and mature into confident young citizens, well prepared for life beyond school. Everyone gets on well with each other and behaviour is excellent. Pupils' views are valued and they develop a keen sense of social responsibility. Whether it is as a school councillor, a lunchtime buddy or as a member of the Eco committee, they willingly get involved in the school's day-to-day running. Pupils say that this motivates them to try hard to do even better. They have a pride in their cultural roots whilst developing a good understanding of the richness and diversity of modern society. Most pupils are very aware of the choices required to keep fit and healthy. Hard work by the school has improved attendance significantly since the last inspection; it is currently above average and reflects the great enjoyment that pupils have for learning in the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good in the main. Staff have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve and the needs of each child are understood. Adults working in the school have a very supportive and caring approach in the classroom. Encouraging remarks and praise for effort are frequently given. Staff use information about what pupils know and can do purposefully to provide further challenge and highlight where pupils do not do as well as they should. Lessons are well planned to capture pupils' interest and hold their attention. Their pace is good. At times however, lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils or the opportunity for pupils to develop their ideas through open discussion. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Staff have good subject knowledge. The use of ICT by staff and pupils is developing well and adds interest to subjects. Classroom assistants work effectively in supporting the learning of individuals and groups in most lessons. Pupils with EAL and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good levels of support from experienced and skilled staff and achieve well. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own work and know what they must do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is thoughtfully planned to meet the vast majority of pupils' personal and academic needs. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum gives children a secure start to school life. In Key Stages 1 and 2, recent refinements in subject planning are leading to improved achievement and standards, particularly in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school's achievement of most elements of the Healthy School award, acquisition of the ArtsMark and an Eco Award demonstrate the success in providing a broad curriculum. A strong focus on providing a more creative curriculum to inspire and motivate learning, together with a good range of support programmes to boost literacy and mathematics, are contributing to the pupils' good progress. There remains however, scope for better strategies for challenging the more able pupils, an area which the school has begun to address. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of carefully tailored and flexible support programmes. A well planned and managed programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes to pupils' good levels of personal development. Learning is successfully enriched by a thoughtful range of educational visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, including sport and learning to play musical instruments.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff know pupils extremely well and work closely with parents and the local community to provide good quality care, guidance and support. Parents appreciate the individual support their children receive in academic learning and personal development. Good procedures for safeguarding pupils and for maintaining their health and safety ensure that pupils are secure in school. These factors contribute to good learning. Pupils show great concern for one another and are confident that someone is always on hand to help them to overcome difficulties. Effective bilingual support, particularly in the Foundation Stage, helps pupils with EAL to settle into school. Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants provides good support

for all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Assessment is used effectively, not only by staff to monitor pupils' progress, but also by pupils themselves to evaluate their own progress. Good information for parents and the provision of educational workshops successfully encourages support at home. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The strong partnership between and enthusiasm of the headteacher and deputy headteacher inspire everyone to work together to improve the school. The senior leaders are committed and extremely hard working. Governors meet regularly and are very supportive of the school. They play an increasing part in checking how well the school is doing, set high expectations and provide challenge to leaders. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has acted decisively to bring about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The outcome is steadily improving results and good progress made by all groups of pupils over time. The school's self-evaluation process is thorough and its outcomes are accurate. Managers at all levels are clear about where further work needs to be done and appropriate action is being taken to address issues and continue to move the school forward.

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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?	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	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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	1
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	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?	2
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	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

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookhouse Primary School, Lancashire, BB1 6NY.

Do you remember when I visited your school recently with Mr Byrne? We came to see how well you were doing. Thank you for being so helpful and courteous. We thought your behaviour was excellent. We enjoyed joining your lessons and were very interested to hear about the things you do and what you think about your school.

We think yours is a good school and are very pleased to see that the standard of your work is getting better. We can see that you enjoy school and work very hard in your lessons. You can be proud of yourselves. You do many other enjoyable things too; such as, playing sport and learning to play musical instruments. We really enjoyed your singing and guitar playing. The lunches prepared for you at school are healthy and delicious!

We are very impressed to see that you have been helping to protect the environment and have achieved the Eco Award for your school. Well done!

Your headteacher and all of your teachers work very hard to make your school the good school it is. We agree with them that it could be even better. We have asked them to develop activities in Reception class so that very young children have lots of challenge and opportunities to talk about themselves and what they know and can do. We also think that for some of you work needs to be more challenging so that you all reach your full potential.

Well done everyone. Keep up all your hard work and remember to make every effort to do your best for yourself and your school.

Best wishes

Karen Ling, HMI

Lead Inspector