

Brockley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100674
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	307435
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Levine
Headteacher	Mrs B Smith
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Brockley Road London SE4 2BT
Telephone number	020 8692 2762
Fax number	020 8694 9976

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to other primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The vast majority of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Of these, a high proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties, mainly behavioural, emotional and social or speech and language difficulties, is much higher than average. No pupils have a statement of special educational need. The previous headteacher resigned in September 2007 and an interim headteacher is in place. A substantive headteacher is due to take up post in September 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Brockley Primary is an improving and welcoming school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents have great confidence in the interim headteacher. One parent typically says that since the interim headteacher arrived, the school has become '...listening, approachable and supportive'.

There are strong signs of improvement, not least in rising standards and the quality of teaching because the school is led with clarity and consistency. Staff know what is expected of them and feel confident that they are part of a successful future. There is a good systematic plan of action to take the school forward. Procedures to monitor the performance of subjects and individual teachers by senior leaders are in place. However, key senior and middle leadership posts remain unfilled.

Most pupils enjoy being at Brockley, feel safe and are well informed about staying healthy. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next phase of their education and beyond. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and they have a good idea of what is needed to eat healthily as they sensibly select from a good range of healthy options at lunchtime. Their awareness of different cultures in the diverse society in which we live is well developed.

Standards attained are below average but, in relation to their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well and they also make satisfactory progress. In the Foundation Stage, children settle quickly and make satisfactory progress. One of the big changes that the interim headteacher introduced was the more consistent use of assessment information to check pupils' progress. Consequently, standards, which had been in decline over the past four years, have improved significantly in English and science. The absence of a curriculum leader in mathematics has meant that standards in this subject have not improved.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and they use the links established in the curriculum well to enable pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants develop good relationships with the pupils. However, teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to help plan activities to match the needs and abilities of all pupils. In particular, work set in mathematics does not always stretch pupils, so that far fewer pupils than average gain the higher levels in national tests. Pastoral care is good and secure partnerships with outside agencies ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are well met. The school makes intelligent use of its assessment information to track pupils' progress as they move through the school but targets set for individuals are not, as yet, linked to National Curriculum levels. As a consequence, pupils do not know what they need to do to reach the next level.

The interim headteacher has energised and empowered the teaching staff and there is a very real sense of team working which bodes well for the future. Management structures put in place, along with the progress recently made, show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below that expected nationally, especially in language and literacy, and in personal and social development. The school helps them to settle

into life in the Nursery quickly. In both Nursery and Reception, progress is satisfactory because teaching, learning, leadership and management are satisfactory. The large and well resourced indoor environment ensures that all areas of learning are covered adequately and there is a suitable balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. Children have positive attitudes and learn to relate well with others. The care provided by adults is good and helps children to feel secure and confident. However, children's progress is sometimes restricted because some work set for them and some activities around the classroom are not matched closely enough to their needs. Consequently, opportunities are missed to extend children's language and mathematical skills and these remain below average when children start Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, especially in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that assessment is used more carefully in all classes to match work more accurately to pupils' abilities and their specific needs.
- Make use of assessment information to set targets that are linked to National Curriculum levels and inform pupils about what they need to do to reach them.
- Ensure that all curriculum areas have leaders in place to monitor standards and of teaching and learning in their respective subjects.

A small proportion of the 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 join the school with standards that fluctuate year on year but which are always below those expected nationally. Standards in the assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were significantly below average and have dipped over the last four years. A below average proportion of pupils gained the higher levels. However, given the low standards many of these pupils had when joining the school, they make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2. This satisfactory progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and, by the time they leave, pupils' standards remain below average overall. Their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points. Pupils make faster progress in English, where they achieve well. Pupils with a variety of learning difficulties achieve similarly to their peers.

The decline in standards and fluctuations in achievement between 2004 and 2007 has been reversed. Provisional test results and the work seen by inspectors confirm that standards overall are higher in English and science than in 2007. This is because the school now tracks their progress carefully, intervenes quickly when the progress of pupils slows and has worked hard to improve teaching so that work is better matched to individual need.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school, as reflected in their good attendance. They are welcoming and very keen to talk to visitors. One happy parent said, 'The school enabled my children to mature into positive, confident young people.' Pupils respond well to the good opportunities for spiritual and cultural experiences through assemblies and a range of visits and visitors, such as a recent

trip to the Houses of Parliament. Most pupils behave well in class and around the school although a small number cause occasional disruption to lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and can explain clearly how to stay safe. They feel secure within the school and have confidence in the adults who work with them. Pupils' involvement in the wider community is limited, although they enjoy their contribution to the 'neighbourhood project', where they work with members of the local community to build a safer locality. The school council makes a good contribution to school life and are proud of their contribution to support Key Stage 1 playtimes by planning the building of a sandpit.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with much that is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and classrooms are well ordered and calm. Lessons are typified by good relationships, mutual respect, humour and warmth. Teachers are good at telling pupils exactly what they are expected to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. Teaching assistants are well prepared and contribute well to the learning of the individuals they work with. In most lessons, pupils experience a range of approaches and this helps to sustain their interest. However, teachers often talk for too long which restricts the opportunities pupils have to take a more active part in lessons. Assessment information is not used well enough to plan activities to meet pupils' different needs effectively. As a result, pupils are sometimes given activities that are either not challenging enough, particularly in mathematics lessons, or too hard, and their learning is then restricted.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recent changes to the curriculum have resulted in improvements in provision, which is satisfactory. Better planning of science in Years 5 and 6 has contributed to the big improvement in standards in this area. However, the absence of subject leaders in mathematics and in information and communication technology has held back progress here. Provision for literacy is good. Links to drama and art are ensuring a high level of enjoyment from pupils. For example, pupils in Year 5 talked enthusiastically about planning and adapting the poem 'The Highwayman' into a cartoon. There are a small number of clubs which pupils enjoy, particularly the drama club. The curriculum positively supports pupils' personal development through effective personal, social, and health education, and imaginative and thought provoking assemblies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with many aspects that are good. Pupils are cared for and supported well and staff work hard to promote pupils' health and safety. There are robust procedures for safeguarding pupils and child protection. Arrangements for improving attendance continue to be effective. The improved tracking and analysis of progress have enabled effective support for pupils with learning difficulties, to ensure that they make similar progress to their peers.

Pupils' academic progress is now very carefully tracked and clear strategies are in place to intervene if an individual pupil is in danger of underachieving. However, targets are not linked

to the National Curriculum and too little guidance is given to pupils as to how they can reach higher levels. Marking is variable, both across the school and in subjects. It is generally positive and often recognises achievement, especially in literacy. However, it does not inform pupils well enough how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and steadily improving. The school has gone through a difficult period. Governors found it hard to appoint a headteacher following the resignation of the previous postholder, and key appointments to the leadership team remain unfilled. Standards have been in decline.

However, the outstanding leadership of the interim headteacher has had a big and immediate impact on the school. Well supported by the governing body, she has empowered staff and has encouraged and enabled them to take real responsibility for their respective areas. They have responded with enthusiasm and initiative. There is now a very real sense of teamwork and collaboration in the school and a clear sense of direction. The governing body scrutinises all aspects of the school's work, such as pupils' performance and the curriculum. It asks challenging questions of school leaders as and when the need arises.

Important areas of the curriculum lack leadership and so the monitoring of teaching and learning and of standards is not as rigorous as it should be. The interim headteacher and, importantly, the governing body know this and steps have already been taken to redress most of these shortcomings and standards have already improved.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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

18 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brockley Primary School, London, SE4 2BT

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you. I would like to say a special thank you to the school council and those of you from Years 5 and 6 who gave up part of your lunchtime in order to meet us. At the moment, we think that your school is satisfactory, but we can see that it is getting better and you play an important part in that, especially through your much better attendance. These are the things that we think the school does well.

- The work you are doing is improving.
- You enjoy school and get on well with each other and with your teachers.
- In school, you feel safe and know there are people to whom you can turn to with worries or concerns.
- The leaders of your school are working hard to make it an even better school for you.

There are a number of important things that your school needs to do to help it get better for you. We have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do the following.

- Ensure that you make better progress as you move through the school, especially in mathematics.
- Make sure that when teachers plan work for you, it is not too easy or too hard, but just right for you.
- Give you more advice on how to improve your work and to help you understand your targets and to reach them.
- Make sure all subjects have a teacher in charge of them and they have the chance to check on what is happening in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead Inspector