

Brookfields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103175
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308238
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker 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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Cutting
Headteacher	Julie Berrow
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2006
School address	2 Hingeston Street Hockley Birmingham B18 6PU
Telephone number	0121 6751897
Fax number	0121 5070143

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Inspection number	308238

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school was inspected in December 2006 and was subject to a Notice to Improve. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2007. The school is working in challenging circumstances serving an area of high social and economic deprivation with very high eligibility for free school meals. The school has achieved the Sports Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The new headteacher, supported by a committed staff and governing body, has established a strong sense of teamwork, which has placed the school on secure foundations for further improvement. Brookfields Primary is a satisfactory school which is distinguished by a caring ethos where everyone works well together. One parent typically said, 'You can see the positive changes in our school and the children are benefiting immensely.' One of the school's strongest features is the good personal development and well-being it provides for the pupils.

Achievement is satisfactory, but standards are very low. Children enter the nursery with skills well below the expected levels for this age. Satisfactory progress is made in the Foundation Stage, although few children achieve their learning goals in communication, language and literacy by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 remain well below average, but are beginning to rise in reading and mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, although rates of progress vary. By the time the pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, but remain well below average in mathematics and science. Progress in writing across the school is not rapid enough and standards are too low.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy their work and relationships are harmonious. There is a good emphasis on developing personal and social skills and this is having a positive effect on improving behaviour. Attendance has recently improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep healthy. The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of the pupils. It is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are well supported. It is suitably adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are fully included and achieve satisfactorily. Specialist support staff make a positive contribution to these pupils' achievement and progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the majority of lessons, relationships are a strength, behaviour is well managed and learning is interesting. However, there are inconsistencies in how the marking of pupils' work supports them in their next steps of learning. The school works well with outside agencies, and parents are positive and supportive. The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school which is shared by the senior management team. The school has a sound understanding of the main areas for development and its self-evaluation is generally accurate, but lacks a clear focus on measurable outcomes which are linked to raising standards. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and is satisfactorily placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision and effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below expectations with a good deal of variability from year to year. The learning environment is stimulating and welcoming and the children settle quickly into school life. One parent said, 'Since my child has started at Brookfields she has done well.' Good quality care and support enable the children to develop their social skills well. As the children enter Reception they begin to make quicker progress as a result of good teaching, with relationships and behaviour being key strengths. By the time they leave Reception, some children are achieving

standards broadly in line with national expectations, except in communication, language and literacy, where progress is slower.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all management tasks have a much sharper focus on measurable outcomes that are linked to raising standards.
- Ensure that marking gives pupils clear feedback that shows them what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the rate of progress and raise standards in writing.

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

The school's strategies to raise attainment are beginning to have a positive impact, as shown in the recent improvement in standards in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1, and English in Key Stage 2. However, more work remains to be done to raise attainment and achievement across the school to ensure all pupils reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly in writing. When children enter the school their attainment is well below the expected levels, most noticeably in communication, language and literacy skills. Children make good progress in developing their personal skills in the Foundation Stage due to good quality care and support. In Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory overall, but pupils make more rapid progress in reading and mathematics, particularly in Year 2, because teachers' expectations are higher. In Key Stage 2, progress is stronger in Years 5 and 6, especially in English, where assessment information is used effectively by teachers to support pupils' learning and there is a good level of challenge. Progress is slower in Years 3 and 4 because the work pupils are given is not consistently challenging enough. Progress in writing is weaker across the school because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science. Ethnic minority groups are well supported and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes. This view is supported by parents who say that their children want to go to school each morning, even when they are feeling unwell. Whilst many pupils show good standards of behaviour, a minority need extra support from adults to ensure they remain on task in lessons. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Pupils in Year 1 told inspectors that they feel safe and well supported by older pupils, particularly those in Year 6, whom they regard as friends. This contributes to a harmonious school community. Pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of healthy living and enjoy the wide range of sporting activities on offer, including the very popular jazz dance club.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong emphasis on developing personal and social skills and this has had a positive effect on behaviour. Pupils work well together in lessons, share ideas, and have a clear understanding of moral and social issues. They have a good understanding of cultures other than their own. Pupils make a positive contribution to both the school and local community. For example, the school council is proactive

in finding out the views of pupils and working to improve the school. Workplace skills are developed satisfactorily through work with community groups including Young People's Parliament, Birmingham Society of Artists, and the Jewellery Quarter Partnership.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

This is a friendly school where relationships between pupils and staff are positive. In the Foundation Stage, there is a strong emphasis on developing children's social skills, which gives children a good foundation for their future learning. In Key Stage 1, the pupils are given interesting activities that are well matched to their age and abilities, particularly in Year 2. Teachers know and manage their pupils well. Pupils work hard in lessons and have opportunities to work in pairs or groups and contribute actively to their learning. For example, children in Reception were given the opportunity to explain their thinking with a 'talking partner'. In a minority of lessons, particularly in Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress slows because the work is not matched well enough to pupils' different learning needs and the level of challenge for some groups is not high enough. Marking is not always as helpful as it could be. Although work is regularly marked with positive comments, it does not always provide sufficient guidance to help pupils improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and well enhanced by other activities. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but there are missed opportunities to develop key writing skills across the whole curriculum. Information and communication technology is used effectively in literacy and numeracy, and is developing in other subject areas. The school has successfully improved the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and it is now satisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal, health and social development is good. There is a strong emphasis on physical education and the school is justifiably proud of its Activemark Award. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors to school. These have had a positive effect on both academic and social development. For example, pupils who attend the art group, for recently arrived children, are understandably proud of their work and feel they settle quickly into school life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel valued and cared for because of the strong relationships they develop with adults. There is a good focus on pupils' emotional development. Adults, including the learning mentor and the inclusion group, have had a positive effect on providing good quality emotional and social support.

Good links with a wide range of outside agencies ensure that vulnerable pupils are well looked after. Pupils say there is always an adult they can turn to if they have problems. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and there are rigorous procedures in place to ensure that adults who come into school are appropriately checked before working with pupils. Procedures for assessing risks and other health and safety matters are satisfactory. In conjunction with the local authority, the school has put in place good systems to raise attendance and punctuality. Pupils say that this has made a difference and they now get to school before 'the gate closes'.

Pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy. These are used more effectively in some classes than others. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils are starting to use these targets as part of peer and self-assessment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's improvement and has raised morale significantly. However, she recognises there is still work to do in holding all managers accountable for the standards achieved and progress made by the pupils. The school's collective leadership and management are satisfactory and have had a positive influence in moving the school forward. The arrangements for teachers' performance management are satisfactory. Although the quality of self-evaluation is satisfactory overall, some aspects, such as the quality of school improvement planning and the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, require a sharper focus on measurable outcomes that link to raising standards. The governing body has sustained a number of changes in key personnel in recent months. They are however, fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and satisfactorily hold the school to account for the standards achieved by the pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	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	3
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

13 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Brookfields Primary School, Birmingham B18 6PU

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work, and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what we thought the school could do to become even better.

- We think you go to a satisfactory school.
- You all look very smart in your school uniform.
- Your teachers work hard to prepare interesting lessons for you.
- You know how to stay healthy and keep active.
- We think your headteacher leads the school well.
- We think your school is a really welcoming place with lots of lovely work on the walls.
- You enjoy taking on responsibilities in your school.
- You get on well together and enjoy coming to school.
- We think you are making a big effort to get to school on time every day.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and senior staff to do the following:

- develop clearer plans to ensure you achieve well and as quickly as you can
- make sure that you all know exactly what you have to do to improve your work
- improve the standards you achieve in your writing.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker Her Majesty's Inspector

13 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Brookfields Primary School, Birmingham B18 6PU

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work, and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what we thought the school could do to become even better.

- We think you go to a satisfactory school.
- You all look very smart in your school uniform.
- Your teachers work hard to prepare interesting lessons for you.
- You know how to stay healthy and keep active.
- We think your headteacher leads the school well.
- We think your school is a really welcoming place with lots of lovely work on the walls.
- You enjoy taking on responsibilities in your school.
- You get on well together and enjoy coming to school.
- We think you are making a big effort to get to school on time every day.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and senior staff to do the following:

- develop clearer plans to ensure you achieve well and as quickly as you can
- make sure that you all know exactly what you have to do to improve your work
- improve the standards you achieve in your writing.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker
Her Majesty's Inspector