

Brookvale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103319
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308279
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Marion Wallace

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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Statham
Headteacher	Jonathan Smart
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Mallard Drive Erdington Birmingham B23 7YB
Telephone number	01213 569973
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brookvale is an average-sized primary school. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is below average.

Over the last three years, the school has experienced a turbulent period with changes in staffing, leadership and management and long-term staff absence. The senior management team is relatively new. The headteacher took up post in April 2007 and the deputy headteacher in June 2007. New phase managers were appointed in July 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Brookvale is a satisfactory school with some good features. The school has emerged from a very difficult period when sudden changes in the senior management team had an adverse effect on the standards and achievement of some groups of pupils and on staff morale. New teams are now in place and there is positive evidence of an improving school. Parents commented on the 'dramatic improvements' and they recognise that these changes are due to the, 'hard work and commitment of the current staff, particularly the headteacher and deputy'.

Overall, achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and standards are broadly average. In Year 6, standards are average in English and science and above average in mathematics. In Year 2, standards in reading and writing are below average but average in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, boys in Key Stage 1 and pupils in some classes have not achieved as well as they should have done because of the staffing difficulties. However, the situation has improved in recent months as staffing is now stable and the quality of teaching more consistent. Preparation for the next stage of pupils' education and life outside school is now satisfactory. Although pupils develop good personal qualities and social skills, progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is only satisfactory.

Teaching throughout the school is variable. There is some good teaching that engages pupils' interest and motivates them to learn. In a few classes, however, teachers do not match work closely enough to the needs of all pupils and consequently opportunities to maximise learning are missed.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and they feel safe and secure because it is a happy school. Summing up the views of many, one pupil said, 'We enjoy learning.' The pupils are aware of healthy lifestyles because there is a good focus on this aspect. They are keen to improve their school environment and they talk enthusiastically about visiting a local home for the elderly. Staff provide good pastoral care and pupils are safeguarded appropriately. Procedures to ensure that academic progress is effectively maintained are less well developed, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Whilst the curriculum is satisfactory, the development of pupils' creativity in learning is inconsistent.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Within a short period of time, the school's leaders have made a significant impact on a difficult staffing situation that had affected pupils' achievement. Effective teams are now in place and consequently the capacity to improve is good. There is a good awareness of what needs to be done to bring about improvement. There are many new strategies in place and clear signs that these are beginning to work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception class and the majority reach their targets in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1, although reading and writing are not as well developed. Relationships are strong and consequently children make good progress in their personal development, gaining confidence and positive attitudes to learning. Teaching is good and tasks are well matched to children's ability. Staff provide interesting and challenging activities and, as a result, children enjoy learning. The transition into the Reception class is smooth. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good and the Foundation Stage team work well together.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Improve standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve standards and achievement across the school by ensuring that all teachers provide work that accurately matches the needs of all pupils.
- Improve the quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the school.

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

Staffing difficulties and inadequate supply teaching resulted in below average standards in the national tests for Year 2 in 2007. Standards were exceptionally low in reading; targets were not met and no pupils reached the higher levels in writing. Effective measures have been put in place to improve teaching quality and there are clear signs of raised achievement already. In mathematics, standards are now average in Year 2, reflecting good improvement. In the current Year 6, standards are broadly average and achievement is good. In the 2007 national tests, standards were above average in mathematics and English and average in science. The school's targets for achievement were exceeded in all subjects. All Year 6 pupils attend and talk enthusiastically about the 'SATS' club. This additional support is contributing to the good standards achieved in national tests. Last year, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did not progress as well as similar pupils in other schools. They are now making satisfactory progress because the quality of their support has improved substantially.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour is good throughout the school because expectations are clear and pupils and staff like and respect each other. Pupils are friendly, polite and keen to talk to visitors. They enjoy learning new things and most pupils, especially in Year 6, are well motivated and want to do well. Positive and respectful attitudes and a pride in being a part of this school arise from the good personal and social development. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and pupils feel safe at school because they say that, 'all the teachers and adults here are lovely'. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds work and play together very happily and are introduced effectively to the richness of the diverse society they live in. Pupils think about the needs of others because this has a strong focus in the school; they raise considerable amounts of money for a variety of charities. They take on responsibilities willingly and older pupils enjoy being house captains and 'special friends' to those in Reception. The school council has been re-established and pupils appreciate the opportunity to voice their views and suggest improvements to the school, for example, developing a school allotment. Attendance is generally satisfactory and improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teachers provide lessons that the pupils find interesting. All teachers explain tasks clearly and learning outcomes are shared well with pupils at the start and end of lessons. In some lessons, teaching challenges pupils well and learning is fun. It moves at a brisk pace and expectations are clear. In such lessons, achievement is good, but because work is not always closely matched to the needs of all pupils, they do not make consistent gains in their learning. Teachers do not always target questions as effectively as they could to promote good learning for all abilities. Most pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is currently developing a more creative approach to the curriculum and this is making lessons more interesting for pupils. Planning is detailed, but not always closely matched to pupils' abilities in all classes. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enrich other subjects has improved since the last inspection and this is leading to raised achievement. The development of the key skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects has not been consistent in the past, although significant improvements are now being made.

The curriculum is enriched by an increasing range of visits, visitors and sporting activities, although there are fewer clubs for the younger pupils. Pupils enjoy the after school clubs, especially the tag rugby. Classes held after school to raise attainment in Year 6 are very popular and have had a significant impact on results in national tests. The personal, social and health education programme contributes well to the caring ethos in the school. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the school recognises the need for even greater improvement to ensure these pupils make consistently good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The headteacher leads by example and expects high standards of care and welfare. A review of arrangements to support and care for all pupils has been effective in bringing greater consistency to the provision. Good features in pastoral support and guidance are evident, and improved links with outside agencies and support groups enable standards of care and well-being to be good. Different emotional and social needs are identified, for example, for pupils who may be experiencing specific challenges, and they are well supported. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding are appropriate.

Academic guidance and support is satisfactory and improving. Recent developments in teaching and setting individual targets for pupils in literacy, numeracy and social skills are having a positive impact on achievements. Senior leaders recognise that academic support can be improved and staff are working successfully to ensure pupils know how well they are progressing and the next steps they must take.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has gained the respect of teachers, parents and pupils. He has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is well supported by his deputy and staff. They are working well as a team to overcome the weaknesses caused by previous staffing difficulties. All staff are fully committed to improving learning for all pupils and the capacity for further improvement is good.

There is a calm atmosphere in this well organised school. The school development plan identifies clearly what needs to be done to ensure achievement, standards and provision are improved. The drive to raise standards in Key Stage 1 and to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is consistent throughout the school is already bringing improvement. Procedures to track pupils' progress have been strengthened and are used to identify the next steps the pupils must take to achieve their targets. There are still some inconsistencies, as pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not yet making consistent progress. Phase leaders are enthusiastic and have realistic plans for improving standards but they are relatively new to their roles and the full impact of initiatives is not yet fully evident.

Governance is satisfactory. Key governors have good knowledge of the school but some governors are new to their role and have only recently received training to enable them ask critical questions to establish whether the school is successful enough.

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
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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2
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

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Brookvale Primary School, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7YB

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and coming to your assembly. We agree with you that Brookvale is a happy and an improving school.

These are the things that we found during our visit to your school:

- You make satisfactory progress and reach the expected standards for your age.
- When you first come to the school in Reception, you make a good start to your education and you do very well.
- You are taught satisfactorily.
- You all enjoy school, behave well and like learning.
- You enjoy all the out of school activities, trips and visits. These all help to make learning fun.
- Your headteacher and deputy lead the school well and all the staff work hard and really well together to make sure that the school continues to improve.

What we have asked the school to do next:

- Improve standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Ensure teachers give you challenging work at the right level so that you learn as quickly as you can.
- Make sure that those of you who find work difficult and who need extra help are given good support to help you to do well. You can all help your teachers make these improvements by continuing to work really hard. Thank you for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace Lead Inspector