

Brookdale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105028
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	308745
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Flora Al-Samarraie
Headteacher	Mr Gordon Scholefield
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Escolme Drive Greasby Wirral Merseyside CH49 1SE
Telephone number	0151 677 5170
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement in mathematics; the quality of academic guidance; the quality of the curriculum. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons; discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work; discussions with the staff and governors; analysis of the school's documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This school is average in size and serves an area which has relatively high social and economic advantage. An average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The number identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, though well above average for those with a statement of special educational need. The Educational Inclusion Base within the school admits, in Year 3, pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Twelve pupils attend the base each morning for English and mathematics and join their year group for afternoon lessons. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark, Artsmark and Investors in People.

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 with outstanding features. Pupils flourish in its very caring, warm and welcoming atmosphere and, consequently, make outstanding progress in their personal development and achieve well academically. Excellent partnerships, for example, with parents and within the locality, help pupils to feel a strong sense of belonging and, as a result, they are very eager to contribute positively to all aspects of school life. Parents overwhelmingly appreciate what the school provides, saying, 'children develop into well rounded individuals', and, 'children have fabulous opportunities to develop socially as well as academically'. The school is accurate in its view of its own effectiveness and provides good value for money.

Most pupils start Reception with skills typical for their age. Standards reached by the end of Year 6 have risen steadily since the last inspection and, in 2007, were above the national average in English, mathematics and science for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good quality teaching and support from skilful teaching assistants enable all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those most vulnerable, to progress well. Consequently, achievement for all pupils is good. Through end of year assessments, teachers identified that a number of more able pupils were making slower progress in mathematics than in reading and writing in Year 2. To address this, they have provided more opportunities within the curriculum for pupils, in particular the more able, to be given more challenging activities to develop their skills in mathematics. The impact of this is seen in the good progress made by more able pupils in the current Year 1 to 6 classes.

Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and their attendance is above average. Pupils treat their classmates and, in particular, those who arrive in Year 3, with dignity and respect. They are proud to share what they do to promote healthy and safe lifestyles; for example, the daily pupil massage sessions aid relaxation and promote pupils' well-being very effectively. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning because the outstanding curriculum includes an exciting and challenging range of enriching experiences, both in lessons and beyond the normal school day. These include the opportunity to learn to speak German and to develop their musical and sporting interests and talents.

Pupils' growing confidence and maturity is seen in the wide range of responsibilities they eagerly undertake. Pupils who are school councillors and playground leaders ensure that everyone is happy and safe in school and in the playground, helping younger children to benefit to the full from the activities available. The school takes every opportunity to involve pupils in the community through, for example, involving them in deciding which fund-raising ventures they wish to support. This well developed sense of community prepares them well for their future lives.

Within the good teaching there are some first-rate features. For example, the lively and exciting way mathematics lessons are taught in Years 1 to 6. These lessons expertly link estimation and investigation skills with design, technology and mathematical skills and they are extremely popular. They contribute both to pupils' enjoyment and the good and improving standards being reached in this subject. Similarly, as a result of the improvements to provision for information and communication technology, pupils have many opportunities to practise these skills across the subjects of the curriculum.

Good leadership and management have ensured that all previous inspection issues have been tackled and that the school has moved on effectively. It is in a good position to improve even further. Governance is of a good quality. Arrangements are in place to promote child protection, and health and safety. Although leaders and managers are extremely committed and supportive, they do not monitor or use information about pupils' progress regularly enough in order to have a clear picture of whether all pupils are on track to reach their targets. This is one of the reasons why the slower progress of more able pupils in mathematics was not identified quickly enough to take action last year. A key factor in the school's improvement and overall effectiveness is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Making sure that every child is nurtured in the excellent caring and supportive environment so that they can reach their full potential, is never off his agenda. As a result, pupils thrive and standards are rising, particularly in mathematics.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join Reception with skills that are typical for their age. They settle happily into the stimulating, lively environment and become successful learners who work together well and show positive attitudes in all activities. They enjoy the wide range of learning opportunities provided, whether teacher led or independent. They make good progress and, by the end of Reception, achieve skills that are above those expected at this age. This is as a result of the good teaching and excellent personal care and support they receive. Daily sessions focusing on letters and sounds help to boost their early reading and writing skills well. The outside learning area is used effectively to encourage children's social development and skills across all areas of learning and has improved significantly since the last inspection. There are excellent partnerships with parents, who appreciate the welcoming ethos and excellent care their children receive. Links with the pre-school located in the school building are well developed and enable a smooth transition from Nursery to Reception. Leadership and management are good. Staff communicate regularly and are clear about how well individual children are getting on. The information about the small day-to-day steps in children's progress is used well to ensure that activities help children to build on what they can already do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine and strengthen tracking systems in order to monitor pupils' progress more closely.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

Inspection of Brookdale Primary School, Wirral, CH49 1SE

You may remember that I visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all those children who talked to me about what they were doing in lessons, what happens in the playground and the jobs that they do around the school. Special thanks to the children who met me at lunchtime. I thought you would be interested in what I am saying in my report. Yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of all the things that go on there.

You do well in lessons and in tests because you work hard and understand the importance of this for the future. I agree with you that your teachers and other adults make lessons interesting and fun and that, if you need help, you get it.

Your behaviour is excellent and I was impressed with how polite you were. You all benefit from the very good care your teachers and support staff give to you and your families. You told me that you feel safe in school and that, if problems occur, an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. In very many ways you are given a super curriculum, and you have lots of opportunities to visit interesting places and to work with musicians and sports persons.

I have asked your teachers to do one thing in order to help you do even better in your work:

- To check more often how well you are doing in your work.

I wish you the very best for the future. Keep on working hard and enjoying your time at school.