

Brookfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112619
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310951
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andy Brickles
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Greenhough
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003
School address	Burlington Avenue Langwith Junction Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG20 9AD
Telephone number	01623 742285
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brookfield is a smaller than average primary school. It serves an area of economic and social disadvantage and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than usual. Nearly all pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (including those with statements), is similar to the national average. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark and National Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Brookfield Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. It provides satisfactory value for money. The school has emerged from a difficult period of temporary leadership and staff changes in recent years. Standards are beginning to rise because of the good leadership and direction provided by the headteacher since her appointment in 2007. The clear direction for improvement that she provides is resulting in a common understanding of the school's key priorities and closer teamwork in driving them forward. Close attention to promoting good standards of behaviour and a positive environment for learning has resulted in improvements, particularly to pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents say that they are pleased with the school's work, reflected in their children's good attitudes, improving behaviour and enjoyment of school life.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards and progress by Year 6 have improved following a sharp decline over the last two years at Key Stage 1 and 2. Although standards are currently below average in English, mathematics and science, in relation to pupils' attainment on entry, progress is satisfactory. Standards have risen in English, but reading is better than writing and writing remains a school priority for development.

Lack of stability has been a significant factor in the falling standards over the last two years. Staffing is now stable; teaching is satisfactory and improving. Nevertheless, there is some unevenness in pupils' progress because the extent to which they are set challenging tasks and helped to do their best varies. This is particularly noticeable for the more able pupils. In addition, information relating to the progress made by pupils is not always used well enough to support learning. However, relationships are typically good and most lessons are interesting so that pupils enjoy learning.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They readily take responsibilities such as being school councillors. The school's focus on teaching children how to live healthy lifestyles is evident in the good choices many make in relation to mealtimes and sporting activities. The satisfactory curriculum has some good features, including popular additional activities and visits. The school is rightly planning to make better use of links between subjects so that the curriculum can promote the development of pupils' key skills better and as a result help to equip them with sound skills for their future lives.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The school accurately assesses where it needs to do better and the newly formed senior management team are committed to driving school priorities forward. However, the role of some subject leaders is underdeveloped which limits the school in its ability to use the skills and expertise of all staff to bring about school improvement. Similarly, not all governors are sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The gains made recently, and the return to a stable workforce indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is successful and provides a good start to children's education. Arrangements for the children's transition from a range of nursery settings are effective. They ensure that children settle quickly and adjust well to classroom routines. Attainment on entry is well below that expected, particularly in language development. Teaching is good and as

result, children make good progress. Teamwork is a strong feature of provision and teachers and teaching assistants make an effective contribution to children's learning. There is a good balance between activities directed by the adults and those chosen by the children. This enables children to practice key skills and develop social skills effectively. The curriculum effectively meets the children's needs and the outdoor area is used well to extend learning. Teachers use assessment information effectively to match tasks to the needs of individuals. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Links with parents are promoted strongly through involvement in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons come up to the standard of the best so that pupils of all abilities, especially the more able, make good progress.
- Ensure staff and governors have the skills and expertise to analyse all assessment data and can use outcomes to inform school development planning accurately.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but with areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve standards which are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, attainment on entry is well below that expected, and from their very low starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress by the time they leave the school. Pupils' progress is sometimes hindered because assessment information is not well used to support learning. During the last two years there has been a significant decline in standards, and progress has been disrupted by instability in staffing, particularly at leadership levels. Staffing issues have now been successfully resolved, and analysis of current pupil progress shows recent improvement.

The school recognises that standards could be better. It has recently introduced a new system to help teachers record and track the progress made by pupils. This initiative is in its early stages, and therefore its impact has been limited. Standards in mathematics are lower than standards in English, and pupils' problem solving skills are under-developed. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. They say that they enjoy school and their attitudes to work are good. Relationships are good and pupils are confident that there is always somebody they can go to should they have any worries or concerns. They feel safe in school. Whilst attendance is below average, it is improving and the school is doing all it can to raise it further. Pupils have a good understanding of what is needed to keep fit and healthy and enjoy the extra sporting activities that are offered. Through school assemblies and a clear programme for personal and social education the pupils are developing a good understanding and awareness of moral and social issues and a satisfactory understanding of spiritual and cultural traditions. Pupils are able to make a satisfactory contribution to the community. Through discussions in class and during school council sessions, pupils make a

good contribution to the school community and are encouraged to give their views. For example, they successfully made suggestions for improvements to the school's playground equipment. There are some, but not many opportunities for them to link with the local community such as visiting the local home for the elderly to give performances. Pupils' interest in learning and standards in basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are effective at promoting positive relationships and appropriate behaviour in classrooms. Consequently, most pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Much of the teaching is lively and stimulating, with a good balance achieved between whole class discussion and individual or group work that challenges and involves all pupils. In less effective lessons, insufficient attention is given to meeting the full range of needs and abilities in the class. While lower attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well, some higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough, and for these pupils the pace of learning is slowed. Tracking information on pupils' progress is not well used to inform next steps in learning. Marking celebrates what pupils have achieved but does not always provide sufficient information to help them improve. Although most pupils know their learning targets, these are not used consistently by pupils to evaluate their own learning and progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school is beginning to develop links between subjects and has recently introduced a topic based curriculum that focuses on developing pupils' skills. This improvement is already beginning to support learning and promote more enjoyment in lessons. The new emphasis on more practical and creative opportunities is successfully supporting pupils' personal development. A good range of after-school activities enhances the provision. However, there are inconsistencies in curriculum planning. In the best cases, schemes of work are thorough and provide opportunities for active and practical learning which challenge all abilities. For example, there are well-developed plans for the introduction of a modern language, which already features in some classes. In contrast, the mathematics curriculum is not sufficiently structured to promote pupils' problem solving skills. The school recognises the need to monitor the curriculum more carefully to ensure continuity and progression of skills across subjects and age groups.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents' confidence in the school has increased considerably, with the majority of parents strongly supporting the view that their children feel safe, are happy and well cared for. Procedures for health and safety, risk assessments and child protection are secure. Recent strategies to improve pupils' behaviour have been very effective, contributing well to pupils' good personal development and in improving their learning. A good programme for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils know how to stay safe and be healthy. The school provides good support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

There are good links with outside agencies who provide additional support where necessary. The school's learning mentor provides valuable support for pupils who have behavioural and emotional problems. The school is developing procedures to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress more effectively, although they are not yet fully embedded. Pupils are aware of their learning targets and this is enabling them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher provides good leadership. She has a clear and incisive vision for the school and has made a promising start to her headship, and she has quickly gained the confidence of all those concerned with the school. She is developing a very strong team atmosphere that spreads through the whole school, and where opinions are sought and valued. As a result, the school is a welcoming and open organisation. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall, but there has been a lack of rigour in information gathering and improvement planning. However, the newly formed senior management team are committed to improvement, and have an accurate and focused view on how to move the school forward. Recent developments demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Governance is satisfactory overall. The chair of governors provides good leadership and supports the school well. However, not all governors are yet sufficiently involved in the monitoring and strategic development of the school.

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	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?	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	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?	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?	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

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookfield Primary School, nr Mansfield, NG20 9AD

Thank you for the polite and warm welcome we received when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed speaking with so many of you and visiting all your classrooms. We thought you would like to know what we found out about Brookfield Primary School.

You clearly enjoy school and gain a lot from the friendships and opportunities provided. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the respect that you show one another and to grown-ups; well done. You are also making some good choices to help you to stay healthy and fit. Many said how much they enjoy the healthy options provided by school. We think this is helping you to mature and become confident young people.

You told us that you enjoy lessons. We can see that you are acquiring sound knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science and that your skills are improving.

Your headteacher has worked very hard with the staff and made a big difference since she joined the school. Staff and governors are determined to keep improving your school. We agree with your headteacher that teaching and learning can be even better across the school. Staff are also going to work more closely to support your progress and help you 'be the best that you can be'.

With best wishes to you all for your futures at Brookfield Primary School.

Ian Jones

Lead inspector