

# Broom Cottages Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114096
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311481
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Buller

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	341
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Susan Whitehead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Mullaney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Broom Cottages Ferryhill County Durham DL17 8AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01740 651363
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average school is in an area of County Durham where socio-economic conditions are below average. Pupils' eligibility for free school meals is above average. Nearly all pupils come from White British families. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the proportion with statements of their special educational needs is lower than average. The headteacher is currently absent from school. The deputy headteacher is acting as headteacher supported by an associate headteacher from another school within the same local authority.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement, standards and curriculum provision.

Although overall effectiveness is inadequate there are many signs that this school is improving. In Key Stage 2 teaching and learning are improving rapidly. These are now at least satisfactory and at times good. This is due to the strong focus on improving teachers' ability to check how well pupils are doing and to use this information to plan tasks which build on what pupils already know. Teachers ensure that in each lesson pupils understand what they are required to learn, and positive relationships result in good behaviour. There is still some way to go to bring about this level of consistency in teaching in Key Stage 1.

Despite recent positive action, improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate and standards have declined. In 2007 results of national tests at the end of Year 2 were exceptionally low, particularly in reading where pupils in this school were working at levels four terms behind pupils of their age nationally. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards overall were below the national average. This represents inadequate progress for these pupils who, when seven, attained standards which overall were above average.

Inspection evidence indicates that standards remain low in Key Stage 1 and below average in Key Stage 2. One of the main reasons why standards are not yet rising is that curriculum provision is inadequate. There is a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop and practise early literacy skills in Key Stage 1. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, these gaps in their learning hinder their rate of progress. As a result, pupils are inadequately prepared for their future learning. Curricular provision for pupils' personal development, however, is satisfactory. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and behave well. They collaborate well in lessons. This helps to create a good climate for learning in most classrooms. Pupils willingly take on responsibility around the school; they feel their views are valued and they demonstrate an appropriate awareness of how to follow healthy lifestyles and keep themselves safe.

Care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. Systems have recently been established to check pupils' rate of learning over time and these are beginning to support progress, especially in Key Stage 2. However, they are not yet used consistently to help pupils to understand the next steps they need to take to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Through improved systems of self-evaluation, leaders and managers now have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and from this have developed a shared vision for improvement. Future planning highlights the right things to improve and is starting to have an impact on pupils' learning. The school has, however, overestimated the impact that recent actions have had on the rate of pupils' progress in the short term. Although this is now satisfactory in Key Stage 2, it is still not good enough in Key Stage 1 and there is insufficient action to make up for a legacy of underachievement.

Nevertheless, teaching and learning have improved rapidly and new systems of monitoring are ensuring that pupils who are having difficulty with their learning are quickly identified and additional support provided. This demonstrates that the school does have the capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere and children settle well. They make good progress in learning to share, becoming independent and making choices because the quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. The reorganisation of the under-fives into a Foundation Stage Unit is beginning to impact well on the curriculum and the school is aware of the need to provide more opportunities for free access to outdoor play. There is an appropriate balance between activities that adults lead and those children choose independently. The rooms are attractive with a range of stimulating activities provided; consequently, children enjoy learning and show increasing levels of confidence. Staff make time to encourage children's spoken language with questioning, reciting nursery rhymes and enjoying 'listening walks'. Visits to extend their experiences of the world outside, for example to the Tynemouth Aquarium, enrich the under-fives' curriculum. However, the systematic teaching of letter sounds is underdeveloped as a result of less confident teaching and a lack of planning of opportunities to consolidate children's new found knowledge. At the end of their time in the Foundation Unit the majority of children reach the goals expected for them in social development and are approaching the levels expected in knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical, physical, and creative development. However, standards are still well below the level expected for their age in knowing letter sounds, reading and writing.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve the rate of pupils' progress so that they all achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that curricular planning and organisation provide all pupils with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop basic literacy skills effectively.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate and standards are below average because pupils make too little progress in the acquisition of basic literacy skills. This in turn hinders their achievement in other areas of their learning.

When pupils enter Year 1 standards are below those expected for children of their age with the exception of reading and writing skills which are well below expected levels. The curriculum provided for pupils in Year 1 is not sufficiently well focussed on the consolidation of basic skills. Boys do less well than girls because the curriculum is not modified sufficiently well to meet their needs. This, together with a history of weakness in teaching in Key Stage 1, has resulted in a decline in standards in reading, writing and mathematics over the last four years. In 2007, results in national assessments for seven year olds were exceptionally low, particularly in reading. Standards are still low in the current Year 2.

Results at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were below the national average in English and mathematics because too many pupils did not make the progress expected given the standards they attained when they were seven. The school did not meet its targets set for 2007. Although pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in some lessons, this is not rapid enough to make up for a history of underachievement. Standards remain below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar inadequate progress

to their classmates overall, although on occasions when some of these pupils are taught in small groups they make at least satisfactory and often good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They behave well in lessons and have developed a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' understanding about cultural diversity, however, is weaker. Pupils move about safely in corridors and on the stairs, courteously opening doors for adults. They express their views and opinions through the school council and respond satisfactorily to the opportunities to take on responsibilities in and around school. They are aware of those less fortunate than themselves and enthusiastically take part in fund raising activities. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what they need to do to lead healthy lifestyles but this is not reflected in the contents of many packed lunches. Those who have school meals, however, enjoy the fresh salads, fruit and vegetables which are provided. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and this is now better than that found nationally. Most pupils say they enjoy coming to school but a few find lessons boring, especially when work is too easy, too hard, or when they have to sit for extended periods. Children are not prepared well for life as young adults because their basic literacy skills are underdeveloped.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and improving through accelerated staff training and careful monitoring, although some inadequate teaching remains in Key Stage 1. In all classes relationships are good and teachers have high expectations about behaviour, creating a good climate for learning. Most teachers explain things well and consequently pupils generally know what they are doing. Teachers' ability to assess how well pupils are doing has also improved. However, the use of this information to match tasks to pupils' varying abilities is still not wholly consistent. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons carefully with most including a range of different types of activities which hold pupils' interest. However, in some lessons pupils spend too much time listening to teachers and have insufficient opportunities to practise skills and consolidate learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum is inadequate because it does not fully meet the needs of all pupils. A lack of focus on the acquisition of basic literacy skills means that by the time pupils reach Year 6 they still have significant gaps in their learning. All subjects of the curriculum are taught but curriculum organisation fails to provide all pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and this leads to underachievement.

Pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities. Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum and the programme of personal and social education contributes satisfactorily to pupils developing healthy lifestyles and their development as young citizens.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral care. Teaching support assistants effectively help children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in class. When small numbers of these pupils are supported in groups such as 'Busy Bees', they often make good progress. There are good links with external agencies so that pupils with specific needs are cared for well. Health, safety and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The recent introduction of a system to track pupils' progress throughout their time in the school is beginning to ensure that where there has been underachievement in the past pupils receive extra help. In some lessons teachers are beginning to use a range of systems to support pupils' learning, for example, through displays around classrooms which remind pupils what they need to include in their work in order to reach higher levels. However, the majority of pupils are still unaware of any individual targets, and the quality of feedback from teachers as another way of helping them improve their work is inconsistent.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher, supported by the newly enlarged senior management team, has begun to make improvements to provision based firmly on sound systems of self-evaluation. Subject leaders are taking a more active monitoring role and they have a clearer picture of what is going well and what needs improving. Action has been taken to establish a system that tracks pupils' progress more accurately and targeted support is now being provided for some groups of pupils. Intensive support for teachers through training and partnerships with other schools is beginning to bear fruit and teaching is now satisfactory overall. Governors are now fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and recognise that in the past they have been too accepting of explanations for declining standards. However, despite the efforts of current leadership and management to tackle underachievement, there has been insufficient time as yet for pupils to make the substantial improvement required.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### 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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
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	4

### 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?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broom Cottages Primary School, Durham, DL17 8AN

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. We found some good things in your school, but we have asked that your school should be placed in a special category so that it gets extra help. This is because the school is not making sure that all of you are doing as well as you should.

It was good to see how well you behave in lessons and that most of you attend school regularly. This is very important in helping you to learn. The staff take good care of you and this helps you to feel safe and happy.

The school has been working hard recently to improve how well you are taught and this is beginning to help most of you to improve your work. We do think, however, that what you are taught, especially in your literacy lessons, could be better. We have asked your school to make some changes so that you all have regular chances to practise your reading and writing. You all need to work really hard on reading and writing.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn, and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector