

Brunswick House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118297
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312873
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Williamson
Headteacher	Sheila Dennis
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Leafy Lane Maidstone ME16 0QQ
Telephone number	01622 752102
Fax number	01622 670102

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is generally in line with expectations for children of this age, although slightly lower in 2007. A lower than average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The school has expanded in recent years and more pupils join the school at times other than the normal entry times than usual. In 2007 the school gained the Healthy School, Active Mark and bronze Eco awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides a sound education for its pupils. Pastoral care is a strength of the school, and is recognised by the vast majority of parents. Pupils and parents praise the school's friendly atmosphere where everyone 'looks out for each other'. The effective focus on pupils' moral and social development results in good personal development and well-being. This, alongside positive relationships with staff, means pupils really enjoy coming to school, develop good attitudes towards learning and behave well.

Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve well. Throughout the rest of the school, from Years 1 to 6, all pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards by the time they leave. This is because teaching overall is satisfactory. The school is working to raise the quality of teaching to the level of the best, although inconsistencies remain and pupils' progress is better in some lessons and classes than others. All teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing, but not all make sufficient use of this information to plan lessons that challenge pupils all the time. Whilst better in English, teachers' marking in mathematics does not refer sufficiently to the pupils' targets to raise standards and secure good progress. This prevents achievement from being better than satisfactory and leads to care, guidance and support being satisfactory overall.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets pupils' needs. It has successfully secured improvements in the provision for English since the last inspection, demonstrating a satisfactory capacity to improve. Actions to raise standards in mathematics and plans to develop science are currently being developed. Assessment information is collected regularly. However, it is not used well enough in mathematics or science to plan lessons that challenge pupils sufficiently to achieve well. This also affects pupils' ability to develop systematically the enquiry skills in science needed to improve their understanding.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and other leaders carry out checks on a regular basis to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although these are not yet sufficiently rigorous to raise standards, secure consistently good teaching and ensure pupils achieve well in all their learning, they are used successfully to help leaders know where to focus to bring about improvement. Consequently, they have already begun to plan actions to address the relative weaknesses in science and mathematics.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to school in the Foundation Stage. Good procedures enable children to settle quickly into the routines of school life and they behave well and enjoy their learning. When they first join, they have the expected levels of skills and experiences. The teaching team work effectively and seamlessly together, so that children achieve well and, by the time they start in Year 1, most are working at the levels expected for their age. This stage of learning is managed well. Adults provide good routines so that children develop independence through effective use of classroom systems. A good curriculum, which includes the regular use of information and communication technology by adults and children, enables children to learn well. Large and interesting indoor and outdoor areas provide a good focus on personal development and basic skills, as well as other areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment to provide sufficient challenge in lessons and help pupils know how to improve their learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Raise standards through a more consistent approach to teaching investigative skills in science.
- Check more rigorously the consistency of teaching to ensure pupils learn as well as they possibly can.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. This means that by the end of the Reception Year they have developed well, particularly in their independent learning skills, to reach the levels expected for children of this age in all aspects of learning. From these broadly average starting points, pupils make the expected progress from Year 1 to Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Standards in the national tests in 2007 in Year 6 were broadly average, although stronger in English than mathematics or science where fewer pupils reached the higher levels. This reflects the school's priority in developing English in recent years. Their current priority is to develop provision for both mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are reflected in their clear enjoyment of school, positive attitudes, above average attendance and good behaviour. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and work together well. They stress this is a key factor in why they enjoy school. Consequently, they get along with each other well, as is shown by their readiness to welcome new pupils to the school.

They have a good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and staying safe. As a result, they behave in a considerate and responsible manner to one another. One example of this is the work of the school's peer mediators. Along with the school council, they also demonstrate the strength of the pupils' contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They take part in performances in local churches and other venues, some of which raise funds for charities and other good causes. Links with schools and villages in Africa and Sri Lanka result in financial aid to these communities and, as a parent commented, 'is good for children's understanding of children around the world'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory and closely linked to the satisfactory progress pupils make. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. However, some introductions to lessons are too long, with the result that the pace drops and progress slows. Pupils say that they sometimes become restless when

teachers spend too long talking to them, without involving them actively in learning. Although there are strengths in teaching, noticeably in English, they are not consistent across the school or between subjects. Whilst teachers use assessment information to group pupils and plan work, this does not occur in all lessons. This means that work is not always adapted closely enough to pupils' capabilities to enable them to achieve well, particularly the more able in mathematics and science. Whilst work is marked, teachers' marking is inconsistent and comments do not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work. The work of teaching assistants is effective in enabling pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make similar progress to other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The school's focus on providing effective personal, social and health education, and its effective development of social and emotional aspects of learning, has been a key factor in securing pupils' good personal development and well-being. A good range of regular activities in art, music and sport enriches the curriculum, and is enjoyed and appreciated by pupils. Extension opportunities provided through 'Creative Partnerships' and links with a higher education establishment enable the school to develop its provision in the arts and literacy. This has contributed well to the progress made by pupils in English.

Pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology abilities are developed satisfactorily, resulting in them making adequate progress in acquiring the skills needed for the world of work. However, pupils' investigative skills in science are not yet developed systematically and not enough opportunities are planned for them to use what they have learnt. This is because assessment is not used effectively enough to adapt and tailor the curriculum to support better than satisfactory progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with strengths in the pastoral care provided for pupils. A significant majority of parents, who expressed their views of the school to the inspection team, are very supportive of this aspect of the school's work, commenting that the school provides 'a caring and supportive environment'. Health and safety procedures are well understood and pupils say they feel safe and know to whom to turn if necessary. Support for different groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English is satisfactory. Because of good links established with outside agencies and parents, these pupils achieve as well as others.

The academic guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory. In response to the last inspection report, the school implemented appropriate systems to collect data on pupils' attainment and track their progress. However, the use of this data is inconsistent. It is often not analysed sufficiently well to identify what needs to be done to ensure pupils make better than satisfactory progress throughout their time at the school. Targets set for pupils are not used consistently to raise standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management by the headteacher and other leaders, including governors, are satisfactory. They regularly analyse data and monitor teaching to see where it is most effective and what needs to be improved, so that they have an appropriate understanding of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. They have identified the need to develop pupils' learning in both mathematics and science. However, the rigour with which subsequent actions are followed up, evaluated and staff held accountable is not robust enough to ensure that teaching and pupils' progress are consistently good. Whilst leaders are clear in their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses they are over confident in judging their overall effectiveness. Pupils' good personal development and well-being are a strength because leaders have made this a priority for the school.

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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?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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

29 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brunswick House Primary School, Maidstone, ME16 0QQ

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear that you like school and that the adults are kind and look after you well. You all get on well with each other and are getting good at sorting out any problems you have, for example through training to be peer mediators or being part of the school council. We think you are good at welcoming new friends to your school, are polite to adults and behave well.

We think your school is satisfactory. Standards in the school are broadly average, and you do better in English than in mathematics and science. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs and your teachers do what is expected to help you make satisfactory progress in your work. We agree with you that your teachers are good at helping you to enjoy your learning because there are many interesting things for you to do and get involved in. Your headteacher and senior staff do a suitable job of running your school and know what needs to be done to make your school even better. In order to make learning even better, we have asked the adults at your school to do three things.

- Make sure your work is always hard enough in mathematics.
- Help you get better in science by developing your investigative skills further.
- Keep checking exactly what the school does best and what could be better so that you always learn as well as you possibly can.

You can help by always using the advice teachers give you on how to improve your work. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J Marshall Lead inspector



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Lead inspector