

Bromstone Primary School, Broadstairs

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118534
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312978
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Silk
Headteacher	Katherine Winspear
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2005
School address	Rumfields Road Broadstairs CT10 2PW
Telephone number	01843 867010
Fax number	01843 871139

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school has a falling roll. There is a high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic origin in some classes is above average and a considerable number of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. Mobility of pupils is very high.

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 with particular strengths in ensuring the good personal development of pupils. This is a result of the good provision for care, guidance and support that the school provides and the pupils receive. Pupils behave exceptionally well in and around the school. They show positive attitudes and enjoyment of all that the school has to offer. Pupils are safe and secure. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and pupils are confident to talk to and confide in adults; 'There is always someone to help us,' they say.

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Standards vary from year to year, and in 2007, they dipped and were well below average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. This dip was mainly due to the very high proportion of pupils in the Year 6 class with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils in Year 2 attained broadly average standards in mathematics in 2007. Standards in reading and writing were below average, though only just below in reading. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Years 1 and 2. Achievement in writing is not high enough across the school and higher attaining pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they might.

Satisfactory teaching leads to satisfactory learning across Years 1 to 6. Teachers know pupils well and provide good personal support for them, resulting in good behaviour. Occasionally, not enough tasks are planned to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class and tasks are not sufficiently challenging. This limits the achievements of some pupils, particularly those of higher ability, and achievements in writing. Weaknesses in the provision for writing result in below average standards. These weaknesses are just beginning to be addressed by the school. The satisfactory curriculum ensures that pupils receive a broad range of learning opportunities with some exciting additional experiences, including visits to local places of interest such as Dover Castle and Canterbury.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior managers know that standards require improvement. Formal self-evaluation is satisfactory but monitoring of the school's provision is not always rigorous enough to bring about the required improvements. Recent restructuring of the senior management team, however, is beginning to change the way the school perceives itself and have an impact on its effectiveness. Governors are helpful but could be more challenging in their roles. Parents support the school well and links with other schools are good. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. Adults' clear knowledge of the needs of this age group is evident in the well-planned curriculum, effective procedures to monitor and assess progress, and the stimulating class and outdoor areas. From low starting points, children make good progress in the areas of learning, especially in mathematical and physical development. Despite such gains, many enter Year 1 with below average levels of attainment.

Children quickly form valuable friendships. They develop an understanding of right and wrong and the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Such values and attitudes fostered in the early years set the pattern for the rest of their time at Bromstone and beyond. Children benefit from a range of interesting and purposeful activities across all areas of learning and are given appropriate room to choose for themselves. Many opportunities are created to develop and extend children's language. A recently introduced programme to aid children's understanding of phonics (sounds and letters) is good and its use is now beginning to improve standards in literacy.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards throughout the school, particularly in writing and for higher-attaining pupils
- improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 by more rigorous monitoring and evaluation and by providing tasks that challenge all groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although standards are low by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the school varies in different year groups but in aspects such as communication, language and literacy, it is well below expected levels. Children get off to a fine start and make good progress in Reception but their attainment remains below average by the time they enter Year 1. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In 2007, pupils in Year 2 attained average standards in mathematics, just below average standards in reading and below average in writing. Progress continues to be satisfactory throughout Years 3 to 6 so that in 2007, standards in Year 6 remained below average in English, mathematics and science. This was mainly because of the very high number of pupils in the year group with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It was also due in part to the above average number of pupils in the class who were still in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and to the very high levels of pupil mobility in the year group. In lessons, pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good gains in learning. Achievement in writing is not as good as in other subjects and has rightly been identified by the school as an area for improvement. Higher-attaining pupils do not consistently achieve well enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their very good attitudes and exemplary behaviour. They say bullying is rare and that adults deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly and fairly. Good gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enable pupils to appreciate the achievement of others and to show care and consideration. Whilst attendance is improving, and is now just below national averages, too many parents still take children on holidays during term time. Pupils contribute well to the school and local communities. They take responsibility seriously, for example as playground leaders and reading buddies. The school council makes an effective contribution to school life and ensures pupils' views are well represented. Raising money for charities gives pupils a good awareness of wider social and economic issues and an appreciation of those less fortunate. However, preparation for the world of work and for their next stages of learning is only satisfactory because of pupils' limited performance in basic skills. Work related to gaining 'Healthy School' status gives pupils a good understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy eating.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching leads to satisfactory learning in lessons. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, ensuring that children achieve well and get a good start to their education. Across the school, teaching is variable. There are examples of good teaching that are characterised by clear learning objectives, well-managed pupils and good practical demonstrations with examples to help pupils develop deeper understanding. In a few lessons, not enough is prepared for the different ability groups in the class and insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of writing skills. This results in too little work being completed by some pupils and a lack of challenge for others. Teaching assistants support the learning of pupils with additional needs well ensuring that they make at least satisfactory gains. Homework is well established and contributes successfully to the learning in class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recent reorganisation of the curriculum has resulted in satisfactory provision that contributes appropriately to pupils' overall satisfactory achievement. Good links have now been established across different subjects. This is helping to ensure that pupils use their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT as much as possible. The school has rightly identified writing as a priority for development and has introduced a good new phonics programme, which is just beginning to have an impact on literacy skills in the younger classes. The curriculum gives good support to pupils' personal development because of the strong PSHE programme, resulting in the exceptionally good behaviour, high self-esteem and positive relationships seen around the school. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for vulnerable pupils is good, but higher-attaining pupils are not provided for or challenged well enough. Provision to keep pupils safe and help them to stay healthy is good. Links with other schools are well established and the good extra-curricular clubs are well attended, for example the popular breakfast club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils extremely well. Parents are very positive about the care shown to their children. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will respond quickly to any problems. Child protection and other arrangements to safeguard learners, such as risk assessments, are robust. Effective procedures help pupils settle quickly whenever they start school. Good personal support is given to pupils with learning, sensory and emotional needs and those at the early stages of learning English, which enables them to make similar progress to other pupils. Such support is all the more effective because of the strong links maintained with other professionals and agencies.

Academic guidance is good, although not as effective for potentially higher-attaining pupils. Pupils know their targets for the next stages of learning. As one pupil commented, 'Knowing your targets helps you learn better'. However, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent in that it does not always give pupils sufficient guidance as to what they must do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have already started work on the key areas for development confirmed by this report. The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has put good procedures in place to begin to bring about improvements in standards and particularly achievement. These measures have been hampered by falling rolls and by some inadequate accommodation. The wide range of difficulties that challenge many of the pupils and the high level of pupil mobility also impact upon standards. The strong senior management team are well aware of the challenges facing them. They have begun to track pupils' achievements carefully to identify any areas of underachievement. Regular monitoring is a key feature of the school's practice and this has helped to improve behaviour and attitudes significantly since the last inspection. However, monitoring of teaching and learning has not been rigorous enough to identify the most salient weaknesses in lessons that are inhibiting achievement. Governors are supportive of the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and parents are pleased with 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	2
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	1
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	2

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	2
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 Bromstone Primary School, Broadstairs CT10 2PW

Thank you for your help in our recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about the things you enjoy doing. This letter is to tell you some of the things that we found out about your school.

We think that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You behave exceptionally well and have very positive attitudes to school life. You told us that you enjoy school and we notice that your attendance is improving. We hope you will keep this up. You are well cared for and you feel safe to talk to adults.

You achieve satisfactorily, although the standards you reach are not as high as they are in similar schools. Standards in writing are not high enough. Teaching is satisfactory and helping you to make satisfactory gains in learning. Sometimes there are not enough activities for the higher ability pupils and so some of you do not achieve as well as you could. Children in the Reception class achieve well because of their good provision.

Your headteacher and other leaders manage the school satisfactorily. They look after you well and keep you safe and secure.

We are asking the school to do two things to help you improve further.

- improve how well you achieve in writing; you could help by practising carefully and making sure you write enough in your books every day
- improve teaching by carefully looking at lessons and providing the right activities for each group of pupils, particularly those who have higher ability.

We hope you will help with these.

Best wishes,

Denise Morris Lead Inspector



6 December 2007

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Lead Inspector