

Broadwater Down Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118566
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312994
Inspection date	4 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacque Buttriss

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	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Penny Kift
Headteacher	Jane Florey
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Broadwater Lane Tunbridge Wells TN2 5RP
Telephone number	01892 527588
Fax number	01892 535591

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school, set within a housing estate on the edge of the town. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much larger than average and there is high mobility, with pupils moving in and out of the school in all year groups. There is an average proportion of pupils of ethnic minorities and a high proportion of pupils who have free school meals. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school has a well-attended breakfast club.

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 which provides a sound education for its pupils. It is a happy and caring school where adults know pupils very well and parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Standards are broadly average. Most pupils make satisfactory progress and achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils with a variety of learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Children in their Reception Year also achieve well. There is, however, underachievement amongst some of the younger pupils, especially in developing their reading, and the more able learners do not make as much progress as they could.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and participate enthusiastically in their lessons. They appreciate the healthy meals. Pupils look after each other and say they feel safe. Behaviour is good. As one parent wrote, 'There is no bullying at this school.' Attendance, however, is a concern, with well-below-average attendance rates, mainly caused by the persistent and unnecessary absences of a significant minority of pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy fund raising for charities and taking on responsibilities within the school. Learners are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers organise enjoyable and stimulating activities which motivate pupils well. Learners say their teachers are 'very caring, friendly and kind'. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which enables them to make good progress. However, some pupils in Years 1 and 2, and able pupils throughout the school, are not sufficiently challenged by the work set for them.

The curriculum is effectively planned, broad and balanced, with good use made of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects. Pupils enjoy visits and visitors, and sports activities are well attended, but there is insufficient provision of other extra-curricular activities for pupils to attend and no musical instrument tuition is being offered.

Care, guidance and support are a strength of the school. There are good arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children and very good support is provided for pupils and their families. The school is working hard to rectify the very low attendance rates of a few pupils. Good links with outside agencies ensure that the most vulnerable pupils' needs are met. Academic guidance is also good, helping learners to know how to improve their work.

The headteacher provides effective focus for school development and most of the areas highlighted for improvement in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The school's 'raising attainment plan' is not sufficiently robust on its own to provide an effective framework for school improvement. However, the headteacher and subject leaders undertake their roles effectively, with the result that there has been good improvement in key areas such as writing and assessment across the school. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Governors have a good grasp of their responsibilities in supporting and monitoring the school and are beginning to challenge leaders to update systems and raise standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception Year have a good start to their education. Teaching and support are good for these children and their well-planned curriculum is enriched by a stimulating variety of learning activities. They come into school eagerly in the mornings and settle quickly to the activities provided for them. As one parent put it, 'My daughter has fun and loves to come to

school'. Staff's warm encouragement and praise enables children to grow in confidence and they clearly feel secure in this happy environment. Children's personal development is particularly well developed and there is a good focus on improving their speaking and listening skills. Children join the Reception class with attainment well below national expectations, but they make good progress so that, by the end of their first year in school, they have raised their standards closer to average. However, their reading skills are too low.

What the school should do to improve further

- Target teaching and additional support to raise younger pupils' standards in reading.
- Provide greater challenge in lessons to help more-able learners achieve their potential.
- Develop a comprehensive 'raising attainment plan' in order to drive forward school improvement with greater direction and pace.
- Ensure that all parents are fully aware of the need to eliminate pupils' unnecessary absences so that they can raise their standards and achieve well.

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

From well-below-expected levels of attainment on entering the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach broadly average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The most recent Year 6 test results show good achievement when compared to the pupils' prior attainment, and many pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress. Unusually high mobility and the persistent absences of a few pupils negatively affect the school's overall standards. As a result of actions taken by the school, standards in pupils' writing have been raised, but reading is an area of underachievement for younger pupils. More-able learners underachieve throughout the school, with the result that very few pupils attain higher levels in English, mathematics or science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and play together well. As one parent commented, 'There is a great relationship between older and younger children'. Pupils and parents alike are adamant that everyone feels safe and there is no bullying. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy their free fruit snacks and healthy lunches, although one Year 2 boy admitted that he liked 'chips on Fridays best!' Parents say they enjoy being able to come in and have lunch with their children on a regular basis. Pupils enjoy raising funds for their chosen charities and participate in community events. The school council meets regularly and pupils' views are valued. Older pupils take pride in their responsibilities, such as being 'buddies' in the playground and manning the school office at lunchtimes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Despite much hard work by the school, attendance rates are well below the national average and this has a negative impact on standards and achievement. Satisfactory acquisition of basic skills prepares pupils adequately for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers set enjoyable learning tasks in a purposeful atmosphere, which motivates pupils to achieve. In some classes, teachers' high expectations, effective planning and well-paced teaching move pupils' learning on well so that they make good progress. However, where teachers' expectations are lower and the pace slows, learners are less productive and progress decelerates. Able pupils say they work hard but could work harder. There is insufficient challenge in most lessons to enable them to achieve as well as they could. Behaviour is well managed, which helps pupils to have positive attitudes to their learning. Assessment is used well to help teachers plan their lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The well-planned curriculum provides interesting learning opportunities that stimulate pupils' enthusiasm. However, there is a lack of extra-curricular activities, other than subsidised sports, and no musical tuition. Pupils enjoy educational outings and a variety of visitors help support their learning in various subjects. The development of writing skills has improved considerably as a direct result of actions taken by the school. However, younger pupils' reading is not as effectively planned and the school recognises that this is an area for development. There are no extension opportunities to help more able pupils access the curriculum at appropriate levels. ICT resources have been greatly enhanced since the last inspection and provision is improving as teachers gain in confidence. Personal and health education is good and pupils enjoy 'circle times', where they sit in a circle to discuss any issues or concerns.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support is a strength of the school. Good relationships enable pupils to care for each other and to have confidence in approaching adults with any concerns they may have. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, which results in their good personal development and good achievement. Academic guidance is good. Most pupils know their targets and teachers' marking helps pupils know how to improve their work. There are very good induction and transfer arrangements to help pupils settle in or move on to other schools. The school provides a variety of opportunities, such as regular parent forums, workshops and lunches with pupils, to ensure that parents and carers feel fully involved in their children's education. Many appropriate strategies are in place to try to raise attendance rates. With the help of the local Educational Welfare service, the school is working hard to reach a minority of families whose children are persistently absent from school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is no deputy headteacher or leadership team, but subject leaders support the headteacher effectively to monitor provision. Lesson observations are recorded as descriptions, but they do not sufficiently link the quality of teaching to the progress pupils make. The staff and governors

together work through the satisfactory self-evaluation processes, with development priorities correctly identified. However, these priorities are not fully carried forward to the brief 'raising attainment plan', which does not set out sufficiently clearly the actions needed to improve the quality of provision and raise standards. This separate document, therefore, does not fulfil its purpose of providing a strong framework for school improvement. However, there have been good and sustained improvements since the last inspection in the areas of raising writing standards, improving ICT provision, improving assessment and strengthening governors' roles. Governors now give effective support, but their role of challenging the school and holding the leadership to account in specific areas is still developing. The school sets realistically challenging targets, most of which were met in the 2007 national tests for Year 6 pupils. Whilst a minority of younger and more-able pupils underachieve, there is satisfactory equality of opportunity overall. Indeed, there is good integration of newly arrived immigrant pupils as well as inclusion for all groups.

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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?	3
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	2

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

5 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Broadwater Down Primary School, Tunbridge Wells TN2 5RP

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel welcome and we enjoyed talking with you. Yours is a satisfactory school that helps you to make steady progress in your work and cares for you well.

- These are the things that are good in your school:
- Yours is a very caring school where everyone helps each other.
- You tell us that you really enjoy coming to school.
- The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants work hard to help you enjoy your learning.
- You all know each other well and play happily together.
- Your behaviour is good – well done!
- You have a good understanding of the need to stay safe and healthy.
- You are rightly proud that your school council helps make your school a pleasant place to be. Your ideas are valued, so keep thinking up new ways to improve your school.
- The children in the Reception Year have a good start to their education.
- Those of you who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.
- These are the things we would like your school to improve:
- The teachers could help younger pupils to develop reading skills to higher levels.
- Some of you could be given harder work to help you achieve at a faster pace.
- The school's improvement plan could be more detailed so that it gives stronger direction for driving the school forward.
- A few of you are sometimes absent from school when you are not really ill, and the school is working with your parents to help change this situation. You could help by asking to come to school every day throughout the year, so that you can enjoy school more and achieve higher standards in your work.

You can all help by working hard and keeping up your good behaviour. I would like to wish you lots of success in your future education.

Yours sincerely,

Jacquie Buttriss Lead Inspector

Annex B

5 March 2008

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Yours sincerely,

Jacquie Buttriss
Lead Inspector