

Brookfield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118869
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313127
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Ellis HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Richardson
Headteacher	Melanie Blewer
Date of previous school inspection	16 February 2004
School address	Swallow Road Larkfield Aylesford ME20 6PY
Telephone number	01732 843667
Fax number	01732 871422

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Inspection number	313127

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brookfield is a larger than average junior school, which shares its site with two other schools and a pre-school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen in recent years. Most pupils are White British and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and /or disabilities has been increasing in recent years and is now above average, and around half of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People status and an Active Mark in recognition of its physical education and sports provision.

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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 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 to raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because standards are too low and pupils' achievement is inadequate. Some pupils are beginning to recover from previous underachievement but a significant minority, despite recent improvement, do not do as well as they should. Teaching is satisfactory, but not enough teaching is consistently good or better to help pupils make up lost ground. Improvements in teaching are beginning to tackle weaknesses in achievement but inconsistencies in the use of assessment information mean that tasks are not always matched to pupils' different needs and abilities, and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. In some classes, good constructive marking helps move pupils on to the next stage of learning, but marking is not consistently focused on improvement and too often does not identify how pupils can improve or develop their work. As a result, some pupils do not understand how well they are doing in relation to their targets or what they need to do to improve. Many pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to develop independence and are not fully involved in evaluating their own learning.

The school has an inclusive ethos and pupils feel safe and well cared for. As one parent wrote, 'The school considers the welfare and education of its pupils whatever their ability.' Behaviour is generally good and most pupils like coming to school. Pupils enjoy contributing to the local and wider communities and the school council gives pupils an opportunity to participate in improving their school. For example, the school council was instrumental in improvements to playground games through the purchase of equipment and the training of play leaders.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enhanced by a range of good activities and visits. Pupils feel that they have good support and that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Academic guidance is less well developed than pastoral care, and assessment information is not always used well to set targets and identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and they are enabled to make satisfactory progress.

Those responsible for leading and managing the school promote the well-being and development of learners. Performance is monitored and the school uses the information from monitoring to identify priorities for improvement. As a result, the school's leaders have a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses, but progress in addressing the weaknesses has been uneven. The school has the capacity for improvement, as shown by its track record in improvements since the last inspection, particularly to pupils' attendance and behaviour.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics through more effective teaching.
- Enable pupils to be actively involved in assessing their own achievements and develop a greater degree of independence in lessons.
- Ensure that assessment information is used effectively to match tasks and activities to pupils' needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards on entry vary from year to year but are generally below average. In the 2007 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, standards were well below average in English, mathematics and science and there had been a significant decline in standards and achievement since 2005. Current standards show recent improvement, and results from the 2008 tests show that achievement for the current Year 6 is satisfactory. The school is on course to reach targets that are more challenging but the pace of improvement is not sufficient to ensure that all pupils make the progress that they need in order to overcome previous weaknesses. There is no significant difference in the achievements of groups of pupils of different backgrounds or ability levels. However, pupils who have learning difficulties generally make satisfactory progress because they receive additional one-to-one or small group support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and engage well in physical activities and games, including stilt walking at lunchtime. They also understand the effects of smoking and alcohol on health. Pupils feel safe and secure and know to whom they should turn for help and support when needed. They behave well in class and around the school, although a few pupils do not always listen as well as they should. Attendance is just above average and has improved because of the good range of strategies that the school has employed to raise attendance. Pupils contribute well to the life of the school and this is reflected in their social responsibilities as peer mediators and play leaders. The school council promotes pupils' views and is involved in occasional projects to improve the school environment, such as the introduction of a fruit tuck shop and the purchase of playground equipment. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community through fundraising activities for local and international charities. Classes choose which charities to support and decide how they will raise funds. Pupils have good opportunities to develop teamwork and problem-solving skills, but lessons do not always provide enough opportunities for them to develop as independent learners and as a result, preparation for the next steps in their education or later life is only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features in a minority of lessons. In the best lessons, learners make satisfactory or better progress. In these lessons, there is good pace, a clear understanding of success criteria and positive attitudes. Developing assessment procedures used in these lessons are supporting the gradual tailoring of work to the needs of each learner, but there is too much reliance on published worksheets and textbooks. Planning is varied in detail and effectiveness. The best is characterised by appropriate objectives building on prior learning, clear differentiation and focused support. However, some lessons are too directed and pupils are not given enough opportunity to think for themselves. These lessons are characterised by tasks and activities that are not closely matched to the needs and prior attainment of pupils, expectations that are not high enough, or, activities that are not open

enough to challenge the most able. The school has begun to develop assessment policies and procedures to ensure learners are stretched all of the time. Opportunities for simple self-assessment were observed but insufficient time was given to them to have an impact on future learning. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in their learning are limited and progress in this subject is weak. Behaviour is generally well managed and there are mostly good relationships between pupils and adults. Children say they enjoy lessons but would welcome more opportunities to collaborate, use ICT, and be independent and more active. Children with additional needs are given work that is well matched to their needs. Teaching assistants are used well in many lessons, particularly when deployed to support the learning of focus groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is being developed to provide stronger links between subjects, and the school plans to change the way that pupils are grouped for some lessons. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship. A good range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum, and Year 4 pupils particularly enjoyed participating in a Victorian day during the inspection. Residential visits and other activities provide good opportunities to develop teambuilding and leadership skills. Visitors, including drama and music workshops, stimulate learning and add to pupils' enjoyment of school. The curriculum supports the school's inclusive ethos and activities like the school's paralympic games give all pupils an opportunity to participate and achieve success. Participation in after-school clubs and activities is high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral support for pupils and provides a safe and caring learning environment. Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust and effective. The school has developed good links with outside agencies to support pupils and overcome barriers to learning. There are good induction arrangements that enable pupils to settle quickly when they join the school. Academic guidance is less well developed. The school has developed good systems to track the progress that pupils make and to identify those at risk of underachieving. However, these systems are not fully embedded and the information they provide is not being used consistently to raise attainment. Good target-setting procedures are being developed across the school, but they are yet to have a consistent and direct impact on learning. Teachers are still not regularly referring to targets in their planning, and children are frequently unable to say what their targets are. If they are aware of their targets, they often do not understand exactly what they must do in order to reach them. The quality of marking is varied. Good marking was seen which commented directly on the success of the children in an activity and offered prompts for further improvement. However, most marking is cursory, offering praise but limited guidance. There is at present no time in lessons for response to marking. The school has been working on developing a consistent framework for marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Self-evaluation has mostly been undertaken by senior leaders and is based on appropriate levels of monitoring. However, analysis of the resulting information has been uneven and has resulted in some actions having more impact than others. For example, there have been positive outcomes in relation to improving attendance and behaviour but less progress in improving the quality of teaching and use of assessment information.

The role of the middle leaders has changed over the last two years, with the development of a greater understanding of procedures for self-evaluation and monitoring. Middle leaders have worked well with the local authority and other schools in developing their expertise. They now recognise their role in driving improvement and feel they have ownership of their respective areas. They have led joint training in developing approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy. Whole-school assessment procedures provide them with the data they need. Whole-school tracking procedures give them a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in progress across the school and enable them to identify groups and individuals who need specific support. However, they now are aware that in order to improve further, they must ensure that data, training and initiatives have a direct impact on the learning of the individual. They also recognise that they do not yet have a sufficiently systematic and rigorous programme of critical observation and support to raise the quality of teaching and learning within their subject areas.

There are good arrangements for the induction of pupils who are new to the school. Good links have been developed with parents, and the majority of parents that responded to the inspection questionnaire were very positive about the school, although a small number raised concerns about behaviour and the school's response to instances of bullying. These concerns were investigated and inspection evidence shows behaviour is good and pupils are not worried about bullying. Governors are supportive and ensure that their responsibilities are carried out. However, they recognise their monitoring role is not sufficiently developed and that they do not have a sufficiently sharp focus on raising attainment.

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
---	----------------

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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	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	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	3
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	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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookfield Junior School, Aylesford ME20 6PY

Thank you for contributing to the inspection and making us feel so welcome. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and seeing your lessons. You told us how much you enjoyed school. Although there are some things that your school does well, there are also some things that need improvement. So we have given your school a Notice to Improve, which means that inspectors will come back to check that improvements are being made.

Here are some of the things we found out:

- You told us how the school looks after you well, and we agree.
- Your behaviour is good and most of you get on well together.
- You told us you really enjoyed all the visits, visitors and after-school clubs.
- We were impressed with the work of your school council.
- You have a good knowledge of how to lead safe, healthy lives.
- The headteacher, staff, governors and other adults are working hard together to improve the school and they are starting to make a difference.

These are some of the things we would like to see improved:

- For you to make better progress in English and mathematics so that by the time you leave the school, you know and understand as much as other children who are your age.
- For teaching to be consistently good and for teachers to set work that is always at the right level for you.
- For you to be more involved in working out how well you are doing, be able to take responsibility for your learning, and be more independent.

You can help in all these things by working as hard as you can, continuing to behave well and following the good advice that your teachers give you.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis Her Majesty's Inspector