

# Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123808
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314726
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Kerly

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	112
<b>School</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Niki Warnes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Davidson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Brent Street Brent Knoll Highbridge TA9 4EQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01278 760546
<b>Fax number</b>	01278 769075

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following.

- Steps taken to reverse the recent decline in standards and the current progress being made by pupils of all abilities.
- The way the school monitors teaching and the effect this is having on the overall quality of teaching.
- Evidence of good features in pupils' personal development and the way the school cares for, guides and supports pupils.

Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and analyses of the school's working documents and the questionnaires completed by parents. Other aspects of the school were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Although the total number of pupils on roll is stable, there are more pupils in the younger age groups than in Year 6. This is because in some years a small but significant proportion of pupils leave before Year 6 to transfer to a middle school. Most pupils come from the village of Brent Knoll or the fringe of the nearby small town of Burnham-on-Sea. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is a little higher than usually found. All four classrooms are in a new extension built in 2005. The relatively new headteacher took up post in 2006.

## 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. It has a number of good features and several aspects that need to improve. After a period when standards declined, they have now stabilised and are set to rise again because of some significant improvements introduced during the last two years. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good and aspects of the good care, guidance and support they receive are outstanding. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy school a lot. Parents appreciate this. One reflected the feelings of others by writing, 'The children always come out of school happy, saying they have had a good day.' The school has improved the way it carries out checks on its performance and has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement. It uses this information effectively to bring about improvements and is well placed to improve further.

Achievement is satisfactory rather than good because the good rate of progress made by children in the Foundation Stage is not maintained consistently through the school. Progress slows in Years 1 and 2 and then accelerates again further up the school. The attainment of children on entry to the Foundation Stage is varied but overall is as expected for their age. By the time pupils leave school standards are broadly average. With relatively few pupils in each year group, standards tend to fluctuate from year to year but the rate of progress in recent years has been consistently satisfactory. Last year standards in Year 6 fell, because an exceptionally high proportion of pupils had learning difficulties. This year, standards are lower than previously predicted because a significant proportion of more able pupils left this group during the last two years to attend another school. Those few pupils remaining in Year 6 are making sound progress overall. Some have made good progress, including most of those with learning difficulties who respond well to carefully targeted additional help, as well as the more able pupils who are on track to exceed national expectations for their age. The school's expectations of pupils have not always been high enough. Targets set for pupils last year and earlier this year were relatively cautious but the headteacher is ensuring that more challenging targets are now set, using the much improved assessment information available to all teachers. This is already helping to boost progress, and standards are on course to be above average in Year 6 from 2009.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. The headteacher leads the school well. She has a clear vision and high expectations of the pupils and the school. She has increased her colleagues' involvement in sharing leadership responsibilities and most of them have welcomed these opportunities. Comprehensive systems for assessing pupils' learning have been introduced and the school is using the information from these effectively to track pupils' progress through the school. This has enabled careful and effective targeting of additional support where needed, and led to improved progress. There are detailed discussions between leaders and class teachers about the academic progress and personal needs of every pupil. This is helping to raise expectations and contributes to the outstanding pastoral care of pupils. The role of subject leaders is being extended and a greater awareness of professional accountability has been established. Nevertheless, some subject leaders do not have all the skills or confidence needed to enable them to fulfil their enhanced leadership roles. Governors have worked strenuously to improve the accommodation and continue to seek ways to compensate for the lack of a designated hall. They are led well and have good procedures for fulfilling their roles although not all are fully involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the school.

The variation in the level of challenge and pace in lessons means that although there is frequently good teaching, overall the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers carefully explain to pupils what it is they are going to learn and usually plan work for different groups to match the wide range of abilities in each class and this helps learning. Teachers plan interesting activities, which motivate the pupils, for example singing rhymes in French. Some, but not all, classrooms are full of constructive displays designed to stimulate pupils and promote their learning. Teachers do not consistently set high enough expectations about the presentation of pupils' work, infrequently commenting on any careless presentation when marking work. Teachers provide pupils with good oral feedback during lessons, helping them to improve their understanding, but do not back this up often enough with written comments in their books that they can refer to later. In other respects, pupils receive good academic guidance and are benefiting from the recently established system for setting short-term learning targets.

The deployment of teachers with a special expertise, in areas such as French and the use of computers, strengthens the quality of learning and adds to the richness and breadth of the curriculum. Special events, visits and clubs enrich the curriculum well. The school's recent award of Dyslexia Friendly status reflects the way the curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the needs of specific pupils. Pupils have good access to computers, which they use well in work across different subjects. Imaginative learning materials are used effectively to promote pupils' personal development. The school works hard to overcome the absence of a hall to provide adequate physical education and makes good use of external sports expertise.

Pupils feel very safe in school, know how to take look after themselves and are confident that everyone who works in school takes very good care of them. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and the school has received a regional award in recognition of this work. Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils are very attentive in lessons. The school rigorously implements procedures designed to safeguard pupils. All staff know the pupils very well and the care and support of vulnerable pupils is excellent. A parent of a pupil with complex difficulties wrote, 'He has had exceptional help from Brent Knoll School.' Pupils contribute to the community through such activities as carol singing and collecting for charities and there are a reasonable number of opportunities for mainly older pupils to take on responsibilities around the school, for example as school councillors. Pupils' good use of computers and positive approach to teamwork contribute to the valuable skills which prepare them for the next stage of education and adult life.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get off to a good start in a class that they share with a few Year 1 pupils. A sensitive induction programme enables them to settle quickly and children make good progress. Most exceed national expectations by the end of the year in all areas of learning, except in writing where almost all reach, but few exceed expectations. Teaching and learning are good and the provision is well led. The teacher plans a careful balance between adult directed activities and those that children choose themselves. The teacher and her assistants carefully observe and assess the children's learning through play and make well timed interventions to extend their learning. Occasionally the children spend a little too much time sitting together in a whole-class session with the Year 1 pupils and this limits their opportunities for active learning. The secure and designated outdoor area is used satisfactorily and plans to develop this further are at an advanced stage.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise expectations of what pupils are able to do in order to accelerate progress and improve the presentation of their work.
- Ensure teachers provide clear written feedback to pupils to explain the next steps in their learning and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Provide a programme of professional development to help subject leaders as they take on additional responsibilities.

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.

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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	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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	3
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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	2
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	2
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

23 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School, Highbridge TA9 4EQ

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed talking to groups of you, seeing some of your work and walking round your school. You were very helpful in answering my questions. I am pleased you like your school. Overall, Brent Knoll is a satisfactory school that is getting better and already has lots of things that are good. Here are some of the highlights I noticed.

- You behave well around school and are thoughtful in the way you support one another.
- You obviously enjoy school and have fun in many of your lessons. Your teachers make them interesting and you all make progress because the teachers try to make sure the work they set is not too hard or too easy.
- The school has good ways of tracking your progress so they can work out who needs extra help with their work.
- The reception children do well in their first year in school.
- Everyone who works in the school takes exceptionally good care of you and does all they can to help those of you who have problems or get worried from time to time.
- The headteacher has lots of ideas about how to improve the school.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on three things to make the school even better.

- Help you to make even more progress and remind you about taking care to make sure your work is neat and set out clearly.
- Remind teachers about writing helpful comments in your books to explain how you can improve and what you need to learn next.
- Provide more support for teachers to help them lead their subjects and make learning better for you.

I am sure, perhaps through your school council, you will want to talk about ways you can help make the school even better.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly Lead inspector