

Brooklands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124626
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	314991
Inspection date	25 November 2008
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	222
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Gary Lee-Scott
Headteacher	Mrs Bridgette Gough
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Palfrey Heights Brantham Manningtree Essex CO11 1RX
Telephone number	01206 392291
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether current pupils' work supports the school's evaluation of standards as above average and achievement as good or even better, including particularly boys' work and that of gifted and talented pupils
- whether pupils' own views, values, ideas and knowledge of cultures other than their own indicate that their personal development and well-being are at least good
- whether leaders and managers are identifying areas for improvement that are likely to raise performance even higher than it is now.

The inspectors gathered evidence from records of pupils' progress, observations of lessons and lunchtime arrangements, examples of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and questionnaires and letters from parents. Inspectors also spoke directly to a small sample of parents. The main documents used by the school in its own monitoring were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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 of average size and provides a Reception class for 30 children aged four to five years old in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Families come from a broad range of socio-economic circumstances, although the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. Nearly all pupils come from a White British background. Very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils' needs are behavioural, emotional or social and/or of moderate learning difficulty. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. When they first enter the school, children's skills and knowledge are extremely varied, but balance out as broadly average. Nevertheless, language and literacy skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world are often lower than usually found at this age.

On site are a children's playgroup and a breakfast and after school club. Separate management groups are responsible for this extra provision. The school holds an Active Mark and is currently working towards Healthy Schools and Forest School status. It also holds an award that recognises good financial management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Everyone involved in this outstanding school produces a remarkable display of teamwork aimed at helping all pupils to 'cultivate a love of life and learning'. This includes provision in the EYFS. An overwhelming majority of parents recognises that this is the case. A typical comment to an inspector stated, 'It is a relaxed considerate approach from the headteacher that runs through everything, including all the other staff...The children are really well cared for and progressing so well.' Inspectors agree completely. Using very strong systems to evaluate and monitor performance, the headteacher and staff identify whatever needs to be done to maximise impact on pupils' well-being and academic progress.

Upward trends in pupils' Year 6 test results are evident since 2005. In 2007, these were above average. In 2008, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels increased. Similar improved performance is evident in assessments in Year 2, with 2008 results in reading, writing and mathematics above average. When pupils' starting points are considered, all these results mean that achievement is outstanding. A similar picture of consistently above average rates of progress emerges in pupils' current work. Standards are high and rising. The present Year 6 class contains many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, their work indicates that a good proportion is on course to achieve normally expected standards. In comparison with starting points, this represents outstandingly strong achievement.

Pupils are doing as well as this because lessons are consistently good and frequently outstanding. Teachers cooperate in teams of three, working together to monitor, evaluate and learn from each other's best practice. They then apply what they find out in their own class. In this way, an excellent whole school approach to teaching and learning has emerged. This produces confidence to try innovative methods. In Year 6, a highly effective science lesson on air-resistance took place outdoors. Pupils raced against each other, first freely, and then with the winner hampered by having to carry a flat board in front of him or her. Everyone soon got the point. In each case the result of the previous race was reversed by the increased effect of the wind. Pupils' enjoyment was at a high level, as they joked with each other and their teacher about what was happening. This is typical of the enthusiasm for learning apparent in all age groups and also reflected in pupils' above average attendance.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Their behaviour is outstanding, based on their very strong attitudes towards doing the right thing and an award system that promotes collaborative effort. Pupils are very conscious of their responsibilities in keeping themselves and others safe. They know whom to approach if they feel concerned about anything. Those asked all agreed that staff take their views seriously and always want to help. They are also sure that incidents of unkindness or bullying are very rare. Pupils know a lot about healthy foods and keeping fit, although some admit that what they bring from home in packed lunchboxes does not always measure up. Spiritual development is strong. Cultural development, especially in the arts, is good. However, while pupils learn to respect cultures other than their own, opportunities to experience modern Britain's wide diversity at first hand are limited. However, a potentially strong link with another school in central Ipswich has not yet been explored. Pupils are often genuinely excited about new things that they see. They are also willing to think reflectively about the lives of people in circumstances different from their own, and about what they might learn from stories that they hear. Singing is good and pupils contribute this skill on occasions in the local church. They also take part in events at the local Tendring Hundred Show. Country dancing with a local group of schools, known as 'the Pyramid',

makes another good contribution to the community. In school, pupils are willing to carry out a variety of jobs that help each day to run smoothly. Their school council is a useful forum, conveying their ideas to the school's senior leadership. Development of skills that contribute to future economic well-being are excellent. For example, pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) as a highly effective component of their work, make excellent strides in literacy and numeracy skills, and work together very well in teams and groups.

Care, guidance and support and what is taught are excellent. The headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher and subject leaders, has produced a system that tracks pupils' progress highly effectively. At all stages, it takes into account pupils' starting points and overall progress, as well as the rate in their current year. Highly challenging targets are then put into place. These are set with the involvement of pupils, so they know what to do to move on. Gifted pupils and those with particular talents are identified in this process and dealt with accordingly, as are those who find learning difficult. Pupils receive the opportunity to add in targets of their own choice, such as a Year 3 pupil's, 'I want to be shown how to skip better.' All of this is used to adapt the planning of what is taught to match needs and requirements. This results in a lively, creative curriculum that is constantly reviewed to match the required targeting. It means that the needs of gifted and talented pupils are thus met effectively. In no small way, this is contributing to the success in raising the number of pupils attaining at higher than expected levels. A highly innovative marking system allows pupils the opportunity to draw their teachers' attention to attempts they make to meet their targets. This keeps teachers and pupils alike fully aware of how each pupil is progressing. The curriculum is enhanced with a good programme of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activity. A number of pupils attend the separately managed on-site breakfast and after school clubs. All the school's statutory elements of pastoral care meet requirements thoroughly.

Outstanding leadership, management and governance at all levels monitor and evaluate performance meticulously and sensitively. Always the process has ongoing development and improvement as paramount. This is extremely accurate in identifying what needs to be done next, although sometimes the actual grade of the judgement is modest, as very challenging targets are invariably met. Governors are questioning of senior leaders, while providing strong strategic support. A good example of their approach occurred when they asked for an explanation of how writing might be improved further. Senior leaders explained that a different type of intervention in teaching would be needed, but this carried a cost implication. Governors acted very quickly to adapt finances accordingly. As a result, the changes were made and even faster progress resulted. Value for money is excellent. Links with a variety of outside agencies are amicable and beneficial, as are those with the local community. With all this success to build on, the capacity to maintain improvement is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Standards and provision in the Reception class are outstanding, because leadership and management are outstanding. Young children thus benefit from excellent teaching, learning and development based on an extensive curriculum and particularly effective systems of assessment and targeting. From the start, children explain earnestly how to 'do my next work better'. Rapid progress is apparent towards all age related goals across the nationally required areas of learning. Despite often lower than usual starting points in language and literacy, by the time children enter Year 1, a high proportion reach expected reading and writing goals and some exceed them. Progress is at consistently very good rates in the other areas of learning.

Achievement is therefore excellent. Resources inside the classroom are very effectively employed to ensure that children enjoy what they do and engage with the activities to best effect. The outside space is particularly inviting, spacious and well set up. It supports excellent learning in all aspects, mirroring exactly what is taught indoors. Knowledge and understanding of the world, another weaker area on entry, are extremely well served by involvement in outdoor activities and work with the Forest School project. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development, physical, creative activities and emerging numerical skills are also strong. A good partnership exists with the on-site playgroup, which shares the use of the outside area. This helps to facilitate children's future integration into Reception. Transition into Year 1 is similarly smooth and effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Explore and implement ways of improving pupils' direct experience of Britain as a vibrantly diverse community.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brooklands Primary School, Brantham, CO11 1RX

Thank you for your help, politeness and wonderful enthusiasm when Mrs Summers and I inspected your school. We were delighted to spend the day with you and it was really good to find so many of you saying that your school is an excellent place to be. We agree with you. It is an outstanding school. Your teachers are extremely good at finding out exactly what you need to do to make progress. They then give you this information in ways that help you to understand it. You play your part, adding to the targets and working very hard to reach them. Your work is often above average, sometimes well above, by the time you leave Year 6. This means that you achieve outstandingly well. Your behaviour is also excellent.

Here are some more things that are excellent.

- Your teachers teach and care for you outstandingly well.
- You cooperate very effectively with each other and with the adults at your school.
- You know a great deal about keeping safe and try very hard to act safely.
- Your progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT mean that you are developing some excellent skills to prepare you for the future.
- What is taught at your school meets all your different needs very well.
- What is provided for you in Reception is excellent, and your learning and development are outstandingly good.
- Your headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and governors have excellent ideas to improve your school even more.

I am asking your governors and headteacher to help you to meet and play with children from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, so you learn about and appreciate their ideas first hand.

I hope that you carry on making the most of your time at Brooklands Primary School. Mrs Summers sends her regards too.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull

Lead inspector