

Brockham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124949
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315096
Inspection date	31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Gray

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	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Prophet
Headteacher	Mr Erik Starkie
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Whealers Lane Brockham Betchworth RH3 7LA
Telephone number	01737 843384
Fax number	01737 845150

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the extent to which the school enables its pupils to reach their full potential, the role played in this by teachers' assessments and marking, and pupils' personal development. Evidence was gathered from records of pupils' attainment, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and round the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils and an analysis of 143 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most schools of its type. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is much lower than usually found. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below that found in most schools and no pupil is at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school gives its pupils a satisfactory and improving standard of education with some good features. Children enter the Reception class with skills above those expected and leave Year 6 with above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have an outstanding regard for safe and healthy lifestyles. Physical education lessons are strenuous and many take exercise after school. Most pupils learn to swim by the time they leave. Pupils' approach to healthy eating shows thoughtfulness rather than blind acceptance of popular views. For example, an older pupil observed, 'Anything can be bad for you if you eat too much of it; you need a balanced diet', and went on to describe what this means. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, and this is the view of the pupils too. Most parents agree. The oldest pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. Younger pupils sometimes display restlessness when activities do not fully engage them. This sometimes affects their enjoyment, though all pupils spoken to said they love school. Attendance figures are average; they are no higher because of families who take holidays during term time.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in some classes, but the school's tracking data show that pupils do not make consistent progress across the school in writing and mathematics. Teachers do not always challenge pupils at appropriate levels and their expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough. Senior leaders recognise this and acknowledge that overall achievement is satisfactory as a result. The school is in the process of introducing a new, thorough system of termly assessments, led well by the deputy headteacher. This is designed to give teachers a clear picture of any pupils who may be falling behind. The systems are good and staff have been involved in training to make sure that their assessments are accurate. However, it is too soon for the impact of this work to be seen.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is a well respected figure in the community and many parents wrote to say how much they appreciated his leadership and approachability. The school has experienced staffing problems in recent years, which have resulted in pupils making inconsistent progress. Leaders at all levels have a clear view of where improvements are needed and are taking appropriate action. However, it is too soon for the impact of their actions to be seen in pupils' progress. This means that the school's self-evaluation and capacity to improve are currently satisfactory. Nonetheless, senior staff are providing clear direction for improvement, though the school's ability to recognise when it is achieved is hampered by the lack of measurable targets in action plans. Governors give the school good support and are well involved in strategic planning. However, they have not sufficiently challenged the school on whether standards by Year 6 are high enough.

The school offers its pupils a good curriculum. It is particularly successful in providing for pupils' personal development, health and safety. It is well enriched by day and residential visits that add excitement to pupils' learning - such as the recent 'star gazing' night, commended by a parent. A new information and communication technology (ICT) suite affords plenty of opportunities for pupils to use their computer skills in a range of subjects. The new national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been adopted and are enabling teachers to be more successful in planning their lessons to meet the range of pupils' needs, though this is in the early stages.

The school's arrangements for pastoral care are outstanding, and many parents wrote in praise of the school's work. As one put it, 'Our children have been very happy. The school is a very cheerful, safe environment with a strong emphasis on good behaviour and politeness.' A group of pupils was asked to consider the most important contribution to later life that their schooling had made. The youngest child said, 'Be nice'; one of the oldest responded, 'Learning to be responsible so you can look after others as you grow up'. Overall care, guidance and support are good; new systems of assessment have not yet had the chance to have an effect on raising standards. In ICT, the absence of rigorous assessment until recently has meant that the school has no way of knowing if standards in ICT match those in other core subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class. Attainment on entry is above what is usually found, though in each year there are variations. The present class began with fewer skills for reading than in most years, whereas their number skills were higher. The classroom is spacious and outdoor provision ample. The support offered by assistants is good. Teaching is satisfactory but sometimes lacks sufficient challenge, given the children's abilities on starting school. On occasions, children spend too long on the carpet, listening to the teacher, which limits their enjoyment and involvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete the new systems of assessment to enable teachers to set appropriately high expectations for all pupils and so raise standards in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that standards in ICT are as high as those in English, mathematics and science.
- Use greater rigour in evaluating the success of strategies aimed at improvement.

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.

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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	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	2
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	2
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

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brockham Primary School, Betchworth, RH3 7LA

Some of you will remember that I visited your school on a very wet and windy day in January. Despite the weather and having to run between buildings in the rain, I enjoyed my day, because you were so polite and welcoming. Thank you.

Your parents told me how much most of you enjoy school. You behave well and take your lessons very seriously. You know how to keep safe and healthy. I discussed with one group the most important skills you need for adult life. As well as reading, writing and mathematics, they chose very sensible things, such as computer skills, driving, and cooking. This shows that many of you are reflecting on what is important in life.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. By the time you leave, you reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above those reached in most schools. However, I think that you could do even better, and your school agrees. I have asked the adults to carry on with the way they assess how well you are doing, in order to help you reach your full potential - this is another way of saying, 'to reach the highest levels you are capable of'.

All the adults look after you very well and make sure that any problems you may have are sorted out. One of you told me, 'The school is the safest place in Brockham, after home'. Teachers make most of your lessons interesting, especially with visits out of school and by giving you the chance to use computers. You have plenty of opportunities to do this, and I have asked the staff to make sure that your ICT skills are as good as those in English and mathematics.

Your headteacher and other leaders work hard to make the school the popular place it is, as many of your parents told me. Leaders are already working to help you reach higher standards. The third thing I have asked them to do is to use measurable targets for success, a bit like those with which you have become familiar in lessons.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Brockham Primary.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Lead Inspector