

Brookland Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101263
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	323432
Inspection date	9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Taylor

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	322
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	Ms Sara Gibbins
Headteacher	Mrs Shirley Dickinson
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hill Top Hampstead Garden Suburb London NW11 6EJ

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	9 December 2008
Inspection number	323432

Telephone number
Fax number

020 8346 6824
020 8343 3294

Age group	3-7
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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:

- the progress that all groups of pupils make
- the strengths in care, guidance and support, and pupil's personal development
- the impact of new leaders and managers on school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons, pupil's work and a scrutiny of the school's documentation and progress data. Inspectors also analysed the parent questionnaires and met with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff and governors. 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 of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large school. Its intake is ethnically very diverse and increasing numbers of pupils joining the school are new to learning English. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their needs relate to a range of learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, physical disabilities and behaviour, social and emotional needs. Free school meals entitlement is much lower than average. Half of the children enter the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in Nursery and the remainder join in Reception. The school has gained the Activemark and Investors in People Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Brookland Infants is a good school with a very happy ethos. It ensures that pupils achieve well, both personally and academically. Staff work exceptionally well with parents, carers and external agencies to promote pupils' personal development and well-being. They also work very well with the neighbouring junior school to develop the curriculum, share information and expertise. This helps ensure that transfer to the juniors is seamless and that pupils enjoy a progressive set of experiences.

Although there is a wide spread of attainment on entry and some year-on-year variations, most children enter school with skills above those usually found. Good EYFS provision ensures that children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start and progress well. Pupils of all abilities continue to progress well in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly above average by the time they leave. Pupils also reach good standards in science and in information and communication technology.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Many parents also highlighted how pleased they are with their children's thorough enjoyment of school and learning. The following comment captured parents' views well: 'My son runs into school every day as happy as can be. He comes out wanting to stay longer!'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils have a very good understanding of a range of different cultural traditions and religious beliefs. They behave extremely well and are exceptionally considerate towards one another. Pupils contribute to charities very regularly and grow in self-confidence. The school is therefore a very harmonious community in which boys and girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds thrive and work very well together. Pupils grow in confidence and maturity so that, by the time they are in Year 2, they play a key role in helping the school to run smoothly. Pupils' strong social skills and personal qualities, along with good basic skills, means they are exceptionally well prepared for junior school by the time they leave.

Inspectors agreed with the parent who wrote, 'Staff are highly motivated and teach well!' Staff provide a safe and very stimulating learning environment for pupils. Other key strengths in teaching include staff's high expectations, their knowledge of how young pupils learn best and the way they plan work carefully to match pupils' interests and abilities. This ensures pupils are engaged and challenged and are successful in their learning. Well-trained support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and learning. They also support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. A school priority is to strengthen the way teachers plan for different ability groups in subjects other than mathematics, English and science (the foundation subjects).

The good curriculum, including many visits and visitors, promotes pupils' achievements, health, safety and personal development very well. The current focus is directed towards making the curriculum more creative, linking subjects together meaningfully and involving pupils in planning their learning. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' independence and enjoyment. There are also signs that it is helping them to reach good standards in the foundation subjects, as evident, for example, in the work in art and design and in history seen around the school. Excellent use is made of opportunities to bring families and community members into the school for celebrations, to share their beliefs, skills and experiences. Consequently pupils learn to

respect and celebrate differences. They also develop a strong sense of belonging, both to the school and the wider communities.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Adults are very vigilant in ensuring pupils are well looked after. Child protection procedures are robust and meet government requirements. Staff listen to the pupils and are very quick to respond if they or their parents have any concerns. Rigorous assessments, along with careful tracking of pupils' progress, mean that staff have a clear picture of their academic needs and can plan any additional support and challenge that is necessary.

Good leadership and management have been maintained since the last inspection, despite a number of key changes in personnel and changes to leaders' responsibilities. The headteacher is building very effectively on her predecessor's achievements. She has excellent knowledge of the pupils, staff and families. Her outstanding vision and her innovation and creativity are enabling the school to move from strength to strength in its drive towards excellence. The deputy headteacher ably supports the headteacher. Together they rigorously monitor teaching, standards and pupils' progress in order to improve them. A number of other leaders are fairly new to their post. They say that senior leaders are supporting them well to develop their subjects and skills. The next step is to extend these leaders' roles in monitoring lessons and evaluating pupil's work in the foundation subjects. This would support the school in measuring the precise impact of curriculum developments on enabling pupils to reach better standards.

The highly effective and very well-informed governing body are fully involved in the school and in shaping its direction. They provide excellent support and challenge. Governors are rightly proud of the school. They also note that, 'The school does not rest on its laurels, but wants to be the best it can be.' The headteacher and staff's high expectations of themselves and the pupils, and their commitment to working positively with parents and the local community, provide the school with a good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

A warm welcome and very close contact with families before children start school ensures they settle into the daily routines, gain confidence and quickly start to make good progress. It also helps staff develop good relationships with parents, so as to involve them in their children's learning, development and assessments.

In both Nursery and Reception, good provision is underpinned by challenging teaching, an interesting curriculum, strong teamwork and very nurturing relationships with children. Therefore children are exceptionally well cared for and are eager to learn. They become independent and make good progress. Staff provide a good balance between activities led by adults and those children choose for themselves. Phonics and other core skills are taught well, through whole-class and small-group activities. When children are working independently, staff interact well with them, often posing open-ended questions. This gets children talking and thinking, which helps move their learning on. At other times staff might sometimes gently invite children to join them in an activity to develop key skills.

The new EYFS leader is leading provision well. In collaboration with other staff, she has made a good start in ensuring that the activities planned incorporate children's ideas and interests. Staff's use of the outdoors to promote learning across all areas is an aspect of teaching that the school is rightly working on to improve. Currently the learning opportunities on offer in the Nursery are limited as play space is small and not immediately accessible from the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of middle leaders in monitoring lessons and evaluating standards in the foundation subjects.
- Extend opportunities for outdoor learning in EYFS.

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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?	2
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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	1
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?	2
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

05 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Brookland Infant and Nursery School, London, NW11 6EJ

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school. We agree with your parents and teachers that Brookland Infants is a good school. It was good to see how much you enjoy your work and learning. You behave extremely well and work and play together happily. We noticed that you have lots of talents. We really enjoyed seeing you juggling, playing instruments, dancing and singing during the sharing assembly.

When we visited your classes, we noticed that you listen very carefully, take a pride in your work and make good progress. The staff teach you well and find lots of really interesting things for you to do in school and through visits and family activities. We like the way your teachers use your ideas to make your learning exciting. We were really pleased to see that children in Nursery and Reception had settled into school and are enjoying their activities.

The staff look after you really well. They listen to your ideas and take notice of them. You know that staff will help you if you have any problems. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and we enjoyed seeing you running around and playing games at break times and choosing healthy foods to eat. By the time you move to Year 2, you are very sensible and ready to help the staff to make sure the school runs smoothly. We noticed how well you were helping by taking care of the library.

Your headteacher and the staff are very proud of you. They do a good job. They are always thinking about how they can make things even better for you. We have asked them to make some more improvements to outdoor activities in Nursery and Reception. We have asked them to check your learning in subjects such as history, geography and art. We want them to see if the improvements they have been making to your lessons are helping you to reach good standards in these subjects.

You can help by continuing to do your best and taking good care of each other, so that your school continues to be a very happy place to be.

Yours faithfully

Kathryn Taylor

Lead Inspector