

Brook Acre Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111202
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	325311
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	196
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	Mrs M Chuck
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Morris
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hilden Road Padgate Warrington Cheshire WA2 0JP

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Inspection number	325311

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds. There are few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The school serves a community with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and there is a higher than average number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Young children are provided for in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and also the Reception class.

The school has several awards including the national Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark.

The nearby Nursery, 'Friends at Brook Acre' has been inspected separately. The report is available on the Ofsted website.

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 that gives satisfactory value for money. In the face of some significant barriers the school is improving and shows good capacity to improve further. The leadership has dealt well with significant changes to the teaching staff since the previous inspection and teaching quality has improved. In the past year, a new and effective curriculum has been established. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly, bringing with it a rise in standards and achievement. The school has developed excellent relationships with a wide range of school partners and outside agencies that make a strong contribution to the school's development. The school is now in a good position to increase the pace of change.

The small number of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire confirmed what parents said during the inspection: they are pleased with the school's provision. They particularly like the success the school has in developing pupils' positive attitudes and their enjoyment of school. A typical response was, 'Our children love going to school and stay for numerous after-school activities.'

Given their starting points pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout Years 1 to 6 to reach standards that are below average. Careful monitoring of progress enables the school to ensure the overall satisfactory achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked-after children, pupils who are learning English as an additional language and pupils who join the school at a later time than normal. Some of these pupils make good progress. Pupils who have been identified as gifted and/or talented are making at least satisfactory progress and some are achieving well in relation to their starting points. Writing remains weak throughout the school, particularly in relation to the accurate use of spelling and punctuation and in sentence construction.

The school is justifiably proud of the good quality care and guidance that it provides for all pupils. This has a clear impact, seen for example in pupils making informed choices about healthy lifestyles and knowing how to live safely. Assessment procedures are developed well so that when pupils' progress slows, this is immediately identified and positive steps are taken that help to guide them back on track to meet their challenging targets. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is no inadequate teaching and some is good and some outstanding. However, it is not always clear in teachers' planning what they expect different ability groups to learn and attain in lessons. On occasions this leads to a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Pupils are benefiting from a new structure to the curriculum. It is very successful in engaging pupils and ensuring they enjoy their lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and governors ensure a clear direction for the school's development, based on raising achievement and ensuring all pupils have equal opportunity to succeed. However, there are some weaknesses. Middle managers and subject leaders are mainly new to their posts and have not developed their roles sufficiently. They do not have the skills in lesson observation to evaluate accurately the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make. Effective systems to monitor and evaluate standards and achievement in their areas are not sufficiently developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. A particularly strong feature is the support for children's personal development and this is boosted by the excellent partnership work between the school, outside agencies and families. Effective leadership has brought about recent improvements in teaching and learning and the curriculum, which in turn have resulted in raised standards and achievement. Children join with skills that are very low in relation to age-related expectations. They make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year are working below, but much closer to, levels expected for their age. Adults work very well as a team to offer skilled support to develop and assess children's learning. Children develop their confidence and language skills when working together. They are presented with interesting and stimulating situations both indoors and outdoors, to learn through play, but sometimes opportunities are missed to extend their development even further by consolidating this learning. The curriculum is well planned to offer a good balance of adult and child-led activities. Children respond to clear expectations and routines and develop their independence skills, for example, as they select and use appropriate equipment for tasks. Excellent relationships between adults and children ensure that children know that adults will listen to them and they rapidly develop their confidence and self-esteem. An enthusiasm for learning and an excitement to explore are promoted well and ensure that children are ready to move on to Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing throughout the school, particularly in sentence construction and in the accurate use of spelling and punctuation.
- Improve planning to ensure that teachers and leaders are clear about what pupils with different levels of ability are expected to learn and attain in lessons.
- Develop the skills of middle managers and subject leaders, particularly in relation to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In Year 2, standards are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress in relation to the starting points of these pupils. Current standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are significantly below average but this group of pupils has a much higher than normal proportion of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their earlier attainment was significantly below average and they are now achieving satisfactorily. The most recent results in national tests were nearer to average, reflecting satisfactory achievement by this higher attaining group. There are some pockets of good achievement, for example, in Year 4. Here, excellent use of assessment and accurate target-setting are just two of the features of outstanding teaching that ensure the accelerated progress of these pupils. The school ensures that all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed so that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other pupils who are identified as vulnerable make satisfactory progress overall. Many make good

progress from a low starting point, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills, because they receive good support from teachers and experienced teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning as well as to each other and to their teachers. 'Everybody gets on in this school' and 'we learn and are happy' are typical of the comments made. Behaviour is good in class and around the school and ensures that pupils are ready to learn and take part in their lessons. The playgrounds are characterised by pupils fully engaged, mostly in games activities, and helped by pupils appointed as 'playground leaders'. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, for example in their school council work and they feel that they make a difference to life in school. There are clear, high expectations from staff and pupils respond well, for example, when involved in determining their own rules for using equipment, which they can explain clearly. Staff are good role models and build effective relationships with pupils, offering a consistent approach. Pupils accept and welcome the school's 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying and racism. Pupils say they are taught about living safely and feel safe in school. The school has a range of awards and accolades relating to health and fitness which reflects the high take-up rates of pupils, who are keen to participate in sporting activities. These contribute to the development of team building skills which, alongside their good skills in information and communication technology (ICT), help to prepare them adequately for their futures. Pupils eat and drink healthily and have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Attendance is satisfactory and the school works very hard with parents and outside agencies to improve this area.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory and lead to pupils making sound progress. There is some good and outstanding teaching and some common features in all classrooms that help promote good learning. Classroom management is good: a strength in the teaching is the consistent way teachers manage pupils, promoting good behaviour and minimising any disruption to learning. Relationships are positive and teachers work hard to build pupils' confidence. In the best classes pupils know their targets. They are taught how to assess their work and can judge how well they have learned. Here, pupils know precisely how well they are doing and what next steps they need to take to improve further. In such lessons pupils clearly enjoy their work and revel in their achievement. This good practice is not spread throughout the whole school and there are inconsistencies in the way teachers use targets. There is some excellent practice in the way some teachers plan their lessons to ensure that pupils of different abilities make good progress, but such practice is inconsistent. Teaching assistants make a good contribution, particularly in encouraging and giving targeted support to lower attainers and helping them with their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In the effective curriculum, developed over the past year, there is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils are engaged and excited about what they learn. There is good use of cross-curricular links to reinforce basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The content and teaching of the new curriculum ensure that it has real relevance and is accessible to all pupils. Learning is made meaningful because pupils are involved in deciding what they want to find out. These recent developments have not had time to make their full impact on raising pupils' achievement. However, pupils are enjoying their work and behaviour has improved so that lessons can proceed without disruption. The recent introduction of some features of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum into Year 1 has resulted in these pupils making better progress as they consolidate and build on skills learned in the Reception Year. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is a good range and take-up of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and including the arts and music. The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive range of educational visits and visitors and the teaching of Spanish. Year 6 pupils benefit greatly from a residential experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided is good. Pastoral support is outstanding: the school cares exceptionally well for its pupils. Health, safety and child protection procedures are in place and meet government requirements. Work with outside agencies is excellent and ensures that all children are safeguarded and receive the best possible support, particularly the most vulnerable and those whose attendance causes concern. Staff have positive relationships with parents and parents place high levels of trust in the staff and the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at early stages and good systems are in place to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Targeted support is well planned for identified pupils in many areas, including those who need help to manage their behaviour. Arrangements for pupils starting school and for those moving on to secondary schools are successful in helping children to integrate successfully. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall. There are some strong features, for example, the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress over time. Some pupils however, do not know their targets because some teachers are inconsistent in emphasising their importance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The clarity of vision provided by the headteacher is a strength of the school. Along with governors and other colleagues who have senior management responsibilities, she ensures that raising pupils' achievement is put at the centre of the school's activities. As a result this is an improving school where there is an increased ambition among staff, governors, parents and pupils to drive up standards. There has been some significant disruption in recent years caused by staff turnover and temporary absences involving senior and middle managers as well as class teachers. Middle managers are new to their posts and have not developed their roles sufficiently. The monitoring of teaching has not had enough impact on lifting the overall quality beyond satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate and whole-school planning reflects a realistic view of

the school's priorities for improvement. Targets for improvement are increasingly challenging and are largely being met. Provision for the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The impact is seen in tolerance towards others and the harmonious relationships between pupils. Pupils know about the importance of contributing to the school and wider communities and the importance of studying global issues. They understand the school's place in the wider community because they are taught about different ethnic groups, cultures and religions. Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively giving good support as well as challenging senior leaders appropriately. There are excellent partnerships with local schools and outside agencies to support its work, especially in supporting family learning.

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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?	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?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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	2
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Thank you all for your warm welcome to me and my colleague when we inspected your school. Please extend our thanks to your parents and carers for their letters and to those who took the time to talk to us. We judge your school to be satisfactory overall, but with some good features. Standards are well below average overall, but you mainly make satisfactory progress. We enjoyed coming to your lessons, talking to you and reading your work. We found that you make a very good contribution to the displays in your classrooms and around the school so that it was a pleasure to be in your classrooms. We were also much taken by the way you use your personal computers with such ease.

We were very impressed by the way you look after yourselves, each other and your school. You take your responsibilities very seriously, for example, when playground leaders help during break-times and when school council members represent your views. You tell us that you feel safe in school. You say you like your teachers and the way they take good care of you. You know you can turn to your teachers if you ever need any help of any sort. This all contributes to your living safely. You also live very active lives and the amount of sports and games in the school reflect your enthusiasm for healthy living. Your behaviour is good, both in classrooms and out and around school. We appreciate how well your school helps you to develop into mature young people who get on well with each other.

It is usual after an inspection to ask schools to improve some things. To make things even better, we have asked that all teachers in charge of subjects are helped so that they can check more accurately the progress you make in their subjects. We have asked that teachers make clearer what they expect all pupils to learn in their lessons (some of you were also rather hazy about your targets). We would like your teachers to improve your writing skills, particularly your spelling, punctuation and sentence construction. You can help by working harder in this area.

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly. I wish you all well in the future.