

# Brook Street Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 112231       |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Cumbria      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 325559       |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 7–8 May 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Joe Clark    |

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.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                                                                  | Primary                                         |
| <b>School category</b>                                                                 | Community                                       |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                                                             | 3–11                                            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                                                                | Mixed                                           |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                                                                  |                                                 |
| School (total)                                                                         | 202                                             |
| 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                                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                                                           | The governing body                              |
| <b>Chair</b>                                                                           | Ms Lynn Savage                                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                                                     | Mrs Janet Ditchburn                             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>                                              | 7 March 2006                                    |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected                        |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>                                           | Not previously inspected                        |
| <b>School address</b>                                                                  | Edward Street<br>Carlisle<br>Cumbria<br>CA1 2JB |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                                                                | 01228 607503                                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>                                                                      | 01228 606473                                    |

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|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 3–11         |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school with more boys than girls. Pupils come from areas of high socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There has been a significant influx of minority ethnic pupils into the school in the last three years, mainly from Eastern Europe. Just over one in four of pupils do not have English as their first language. Half the teachers have joined the school in the last 12 months. The school is currently receiving extra support from the local authority's Improving Schools Programme.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of a Foundation Stage unit with integrated provision for part-time Nursery children and full-time Reception children. Privately managed childcare on the school site consists of a before- and after-school club and holiday play scheme for pupils aged over 5 years and up to 11 years. This did not form part of the inspection.

## 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 which looks after its pupils well. 'The dedication, expertise, and care of the teachers and staff ensures my son makes good progress' and 'I am thoroughly happy with all aspects of Brook Street school' were typical parental comments. Pupils' personal development is good and the school provides good levels of personal support and satisfactory academic guidance. Pupils' behaviour is good. The nurture group is helping pupils with social and emotional difficulties manage their behaviour in more acceptable ways. Pupils from all cultures and backgrounds mix easily and get on well together. The school fosters a 'You Can Do It!' culture and attitudes to learning are good overall. A satisfactory curriculum effectively supports pupils' personal development. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the many enrichment activities the school provides, not only in sport but in activities such as 'Let's Get Cooking'. Pupils enjoy coming to school where their attendance is satisfactory. They say they feel safe in school and that bullying is very rare. Relationships between each other and with adults are positive and encouraging. The school looks after its pupils well. Good links with outside agencies provide effective support for vulnerable groups. Academic guidance is satisfactory although teachers' marking is not consistently helpful enough to pupils. Pupils know about the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and keeping safe. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and make a satisfactory contribution to the smooth running of the school. Preparation for the next stage of learning is satisfactory.

Pupils join Year 1 with standards that are well below average. Between Years 1 and 6, high numbers of pupils leave and join the school at different times. Available data suggests that, although the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were well below average, given their starting points, pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall, and girls achieved much better than boys. Overall standards at the end of Year 6 do not appear to have improved much overall on what they were at the beginning of Year 1 because of the significant minority of pupils who join the school after that time with very low standards in English. Reading standards in Key Stage 1 and writing in Key stage 2 are the weaker elements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The progress of pupils who join the school with little or no English is slow to start with, but once they acquire basic English skills, their progress accelerates quickly and is satisfactory overall. At the end of both Key Stages, a small proportion of the more able pupils do not achieve the higher level grades in national tests they are capable of. This is partly because teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, and with some strengths, does not focus enough on providing the challenge required to meet their particular needs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been reorganised into a headteacher and a curriculum manager. Their strong leadership has ensured that new pupils are quickly and effectively integrated with the school. Systems of monitoring and self-evaluation are satisfactory but improving through the good support of the local authority. Subject leaders, some of whom are new, are variable in quality and their monitoring and evaluation role particularly is underdeveloped. New and more effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and intervening when underachievement is identified have been successfully introduced. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, although not rigorous enough in the past, are now accurately identifying where improvement is needed. There is sound capacity to improve. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school. Many of the comments in the parent questionnaire spoke of parents being 'very happy'

with what the school provides. The governing body provides appropriate support and encouragement. Its role as critical friend is developing.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Most children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills and personal development. A significant minority of children enter school during the Reception Year with extremely low language and communication skills and a significant number of more able children move to other schools at the end of the Nursery Year. Consequently overall levels of skill in Reception are lower than at the start of Nursery. All children make good progress from their starting point in most areas of learning, but by the end of Reception overall standards are still well below average.

The introduction of a new and systematic approach to phonics is having a positive impact on standards in reading and writing. Teaching is good. Teachers and adults encourage children's spoken language, and stories and rhymes are used as a focus to develop literacy skills. Themed days where children and staff dress up in role for example, as explorers, engage children well and give first-hand experiences for children to talk, read and write about. Children have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of interesting activities both indoors and out, which promotes their independent skills and personal development. In addition they experience tasks that are led by adults and well focused on learning. The learning environment is well resourced and attractive. Children relate well to each other and relationships with adults are a particular strength. Behaviour is good. Children are safe and secure and welfare requirements are met. Parents are welcomed daily and are very positive about the provision their children receive. Good leadership and management, with its team approach, give a clear vision for further improvements.

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

- Ensure there is sufficient challenge in teaching, particularly for more able pupils, to raise standards in reading and writing, especially for boys.
- Further develop the role of subject leaders particularly in monitoring and developing the quality of teaching and learning.
- Ensure greater consistency in marking, to help pupils in all classes improve their work.

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**

Standards are well below average. Given pupils' starting points their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils join Year 1 with standards that are generally well below average. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, standards continue to be well below average because of the significant minority of pupils, most of whom do not speak English, who join the school after Year 1. In the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were well below average, particularly in reading. Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2008 indicate that the school's results were well below average overall especially in writing. Science

results were broadly average. These results represent satisfactory achievement for pupils overall and for the significant numbers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or language difficulties. However, more able pupils did not attain the higher Level 5 grades they were capable of, particularly in English. Boys' achievement lagged behind that of girls. Current standards are well below average Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve the targets set for them in national tests due to take place in summer 2009.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The 'You can do It!' initiative is helping increase confidence and raise self-esteem. Assemblies provide good opportunities for prayer and reflection to which pupils respond well. Relationships throughout the school are good and support learning well. Behaviour is good. There have been no recent exclusions. Pupils feel safe and say there is rarely any bullying but they know who to turn to if they have any concerns. Pupils have reasonable opportunities to take on responsibilities and exercise leadership skills, for example, as school councillors or tuck shop monitors, but say they would like more. Girls' attitudes to learning are good. Boys' attitudes to learning are at least satisfactory and improving but their achievement lags behind that of girls. Attendance is satisfactory. Links with the local community, for example, Kings Church and Carlisle United Football Club, are good. The 'Carlisle Young Mayor' has been a Brook Street pupil in three out of the last five years. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of the healthy tuck shop and taking regular exercise. They know how to keep safe, including Internet safety. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of learning is satisfactory. By the time they leave school they have good personal and social skills and they are making satisfactory progress in developing basic skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but improving. There are some common strengths in the teaching. Relationships are good and provide pupils with good encouragement and support. There is good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, particularly in presenting lessons in new and interesting ways. Teaching assistants are well deployed and work effectively with small groups or individuals. Pupils are well managed and time is used effectively for learning. There are some examples of good marking, but marking overall is inconsistent in giving pupils enough guidance to help them effectively make the next steps in learning. Planning takes into account the groups of different ability in the class but there is insufficient focus on ensuring that the more able pupils are fully stretched. Increasingly effective training in strategies to teach pupils whose first language is not English, is helping improve classroom practice.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It effectively supports the needs of pupils through targeted support for both groups and individuals, for example, through enrichment afternoons in Key Stage 1 and 'We Have Done It!' time in Key Stage 2. 'You Can Do It!' days help to improve basic

skills. The curriculum effectively supports pupils' personal development through well planned programmes of personal, social health and citizenship education. All statutory requirements are met. French is taught from Year 2 onwards. A good range of visitors, such as theatre groups, and visits that include residential stays, help enrich and enhance learning. The curriculum is fully inclusive. Multicultural weeks develop pupils' awareness of how people live in other countries, and help pupils appreciate the diversity of their own school community. A recent Activemark award reflects the priority given to promoting fitness. Community links are good. The school works hard to reach out to parents and others who do not speak English particularly through the use of a variety of translation services. The curriculum is improving and supports pupils' satisfactory progress. It does not yet ensure that boys and the more able achieve the very best that they can.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils receive good pastoral support. Very good links exist with external agencies and local support groups, such as the school nurse and the Botcherby Family Centre. Vulnerable groups receive good support, for example, through the extended school provision before and after school. Teaching assistants are trained in a variety of intervention and support programmes including Early Literacy Support and Talk Partners. Effective strategies are in place to promote pupils' health and safety. Safeguarding systems are in place and meet current requirements. Good links, especially in sport, exist with the local academy which helps ease the transition to secondary school. Pupils receive satisfactory guidance and support in improving their academic work. Since February, Year 6 booster classes have been helping pupils prepare for this summer's national tests. New and more regular assessment systems are providing pupils with more accurate targets for improvement but these are not yet consistent in all classes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strong leadership by the headteacher and curriculum manager has enabled the school to successfully integrate significant numbers of minority ethnic pupils into most year groups. This change in the school's population posed a great challenge to the school but one which the school has embraced. Through sheer hard work on the part of all the staff, and effective liaison with parents, the school has developed into a harmonious community where diversity is welcomed and celebrated. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the priorities for improvement are the right ones. Systems for monitoring important aspects of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching and learning, assessment practice and the tracking of pupils' progress, are satisfactory but improving. Subject leaders have not developed their full role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The school works hard to engage parents who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Governors provide good support and encouragement but limited, though increasingly effective, challenge. The school met its statutory targets at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008. Community cohesion is good overall. It is excellent within the school and local community because there is a very good awareness of the groups with whom it needs to work. Pupils have a good awareness of religious and cultural diversity nationally and globally. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The school gives sound value for money.

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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 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|

### 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements                                                                                                   | 3   |

### 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? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 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/or disabilities make progress                           | 3 |

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

|                                                                                                               |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 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 |
| 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                                    | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

## The quality of provision

|                                                                                                    |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?                                             | 2 |

## 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                                                                                            | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated                                                                   | 2   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?                                                                                   | 2   |
| 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  |

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brook Street Primary School, Cumbria, CA1 2JB

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit, especially your assembly. It was great to hear you singing 'We are children of Brook Street School...' with such enthusiasm! This is what we found during our inspection.

Yours is a satisfactory school which has some good features. These are its main strengths.

- You get off to a good start in the Reception class where you make good progress and are well cared for.
- Everyone in the school gets on really well together.
- You enjoy school where your attendance is satisfactory.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Attitudes to learning affect how well you achieve: girls' attitudes are generally better than boys'.
- The school takes good care of your personal needs.
- The after-school clubs, and the trips and visits the school arranges for you enhance your learning.

These are the things we think the school can work on to make improvements.

- Help you all to achieve higher standards in reading and writing.
- Make sure those of you with the most ability are given harder work to do in lessons so you can achieve the best possible standards.
- Help the teachers who have responsibility for different subjects to become more effective in helping you to achieve well and reach high standards.
- Ensure that the marking of your books in all classes tells you what you need to do to improve your work.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard and attending more regularly.

Thank you once again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Joe Clark

Lead inspector