

Brambletye Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125068
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328277
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jenny Maddox
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2006
School address	Brambletye Park Road Redhill RH1 6JX
Telephone number	01737 763488
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brambletye is larger than most junior schools. In recent years there have been considerable changes to the staffing and leadership of the school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) has fallen in recent years and is now about average. These pupils have a variety of needs including speech, language and communication needs and social and behavioural needs. The school has Healthy School, 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: 3

Brambletye Junior is a satisfactory school. Over the last year the new headteacher has very quickly set a clear direction for its development, managed staff changes effectively, and identified key areas for improvement. Pupils had been concerned about aspects of behaviour, which they say have now been successfully dealt with through new procedures. Achievement is now being celebrated through 'star of the week', which recognises good work and behaviour and is helping to build up pupils' self-esteem. Pupils enjoy the suspense of not knowing who is going to be chosen. Parents are particularly pleased with the improved communication they now have with the school. They appreciate that the headteacher is in the playground each morning to chat with them and to welcome pupils. Decoration and refurbishment have helped to improve the learning environment. The school has been particularly careful in its appointments of staff. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to establish a new but confident senior leadership team. However, the overall quality of teaching and learning remains satisfactory. This is starting to be addressed through careful monitoring and opportunities for further professional development. Although the actions to raise achievement and standards are well focused they are new and have yet to show any significant impact.

Given their starting points in Year 3 pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2006 but have since shown improvement. In English and science they are broadly average, but in mathematics they are below average. However, this level of achievement masks the fact that there is considerable variation in the rates of progress made both between and within year groups. The main reason for this is that progress has not been assessed and tracked well enough to enable teachers to build effectively on pupils' prior learning. This has been recognised and new procedures have been put in place. These clearly show how well pupils are doing, where there is underachievement, and where more challenge is required. However, the use of this information to plan appropriate learning activities for all abilities, both within mixed-ability classes and sets, is inconsistent. Consequently, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and less able ones do not receive the support they require, with the result that that progress slows. In response to past underachievement the school has identified where additional support is required to help pupils catch up in their learning. In Year 6, along with planned booster support, this is helping to ensure that pupils are now on track to meet their target levels.

Through a time of considerable change the school has ensured that a high level of pastoral care is provided so that pupils' good personal development has been sustained. Pupils enjoy school, particularly after-school clubs. They like those subjects where 'work is not repeated and gone over a lot'. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. The school council manages its own budget and is especially proud of its efforts to eliminate litter through the purchase of new litter bins. Although involved in helping to improve the school community, pupils have yet to be involved more fully in their own learning. They are not yet sufficiently aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. They are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their learning in lessons and teachers do not give enough constructive comments in marking or set personal targets for them to aim to achieve.

The current school improvement plan is well constructed and is based on an accurate analysis of the school's performance. It prioritises the need to raise achievement and standards and to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning. However, many of the school's actions are recent and have yet to be fully monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness.

Given the school's commitment and determination to do better, it has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the planned actions to raise achievement and standards, and to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, are rigorously monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness.
- Ensure that teachers make full use of the information they have about how well pupils are doing to plan an appropriate level of work for all.
- Use marking, personal targets and evaluation in lessons to guide pupils in their learning and to show them how they can improve further.

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils with LDD or who speak English as an additional language make broadly similar progress. The lack of rigorous and informative assessment procedures has hindered pupils' progress. New procedures for tracking and recording progress are now in place. This is enabling the school to analyse accurately the progress made by different groups of pupils, so that any underachievement can be addressed. The new headteacher quickly identified that achievement and rates of progress across the school needed to improve and well-planned action is now being taken to this end. In English, regular writing assessments, linked to targets for improvement, and daily guided reading sessions are planned. In mathematics, teachers have been supported in their planning and learning objectives are now more precise. In science there is now a greater emphasis on investigation to help develop pupils' understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, particularly because of the good relationships between pupils and staff and the many sporting activities on offer. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their involvement in the 'five expectations' behaviour programme means they have a good understanding of right and wrong. Spiritual development is supported by good assemblies. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the opportunities for cultural development provided in religious education and art lessons. They have a clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and speak confidently about the positive effect that a good diet and exercise has on their health. Pupils feel safe at school and feel confident in approaching staff with any problems they have. Behaviour is good overall. Pupils play well together in the playground. However, when not sufficiently involved in lessons some become restless and this slows the progress they make. They are more receptive to being organised in lessons and find it harder when asked to work independently. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community as members of the school council, as buddies for new arrivals, and as fundraisers for their selected charities. Their attendance is in line with national levels. The introduction of recent initiatives has been effective in improving the attendance of targeted pupils. Pupils' good personal and social skills, along

with their sound grasp of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, adequately prepares them for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although good teaching is increasingly evident the overall quality remains variable across classes and year groups. Classes are generally managed well and relationships between staff and pupils are good. In better lessons, teachers use a good range of learning strategies and resources to fully involve all pupils in their learning. The focus of the lesson is generally shared with pupils but this is not always followed up with opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and how well they have done. There is inconsistency in planning for pupils' different learning needs; in particular, there is sometimes an insufficient level of challenge for more able pupils. This slows the progress pupils make in lessons and at times results in them losing focus and becoming restless. The quality of support given by learning support assistants to pupils is variable. Planning does not always indicate how the assistants are going to be used throughout lessons. Where support is more effective, assistants work closely with groups and take time to check that they understand what they are learning about and the activities they are involved in.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils satisfactorily. There is a strong, successful emphasis on pupils' personal development. The provision for English and mathematics is adequate. Of necessity, the school is quickly seeking to improve this through improved planning and better use of assessment. Recent changes in timetabling now provide better opportunities for pupils to work independently and to use and develop their different skills in more interesting and purposeful ways. Younger pupils have independent learning sessions that support transition from their feeder infant school, building on previous learning experiences. Good use is made of specialist tuition in physical education, art and design, design technology and music. Extra-curricular activities and school trips enhance learning well. For example, pupils spoke animatedly about an activity week where they took part in a range of activities from archery to pond dipping. The 'Shout About' group for gifted and talented pupils is also a popular initiative that extends the learning of more able pupils. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of school clubs and activities, including coaching sessions with the local secondary school. These are successful in developing a wide range of interest and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care and support for pupils is good. Procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are thorough. They know that if they have any concerns these will be dealt with sensitively. The transition arrangements from Key Stage 1 are effective in settling pupils quickly into the school community. Year 6 pupils make a good contribution to this through peer mentoring. The school offers good support for vulnerable pupils and their families. This is enabling these pupils to play a full part in school life. The provision for pupils with LDD and for those who have English as additional language is satisfactory. The school has reviewed the systems of support offered to these pupils, particularly within lessons, to improve this provision. The

focused support that pupils receive through a literacy intervention programme and through an emotional literacy initiative is beginning to have an impact on their progress in reading and on their behaviour. Training has been provided in the support of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has recently reviewed its systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress in English and mathematics. This is helping to provide a much clearer picture of how well pupils are doing. However, this information is not yet used to set individual targets for pupils or to show them how to improve their work. Although work is marked regularly, the use of constructive comments to guide future learning is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, with the new senior leadership team, has made an accurate evaluation of the school's performance and constructed a school improvement plan that rigorously maps the way forward. The monitoring of teaching and learning has delivered difficult messages to staff and shown where improvements are urgently needed. Along with careful staff recruitment, this is starting to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' progress is now being carefully monitored and used to set end-of-year targets to aim for, although for most pupils these offer only an adequate level of challenge. As part of performance management, teachers are now accountable for the progress made by pupils. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and where improvements are needed. With more immediate information now available through the closer tracking of pupil progress they are able to offer a greater level of challenge regarding the school's performance. Good links with parents enable them to be involved in their children's learning. They appreciate the parent forums that are held, for example to discuss homework provision. They also support the school through considerable fund-raising. Links with other schools are good and support curriculum provision and the induction of pupils into Year 3.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	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	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	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	3
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**

26 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brambletye Junior School, Redhill, RH1 6JX

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. We have decided that Brambletye Junior is a satisfactory school.

We liked these things the most.

- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- You enjoy school and are all keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You have lots of exciting events and many school clubs.
- You are keen to take on responsibilities.
- Your headteacher is doing a very good job and is well supported by the school governors.

We have asked the school to work on the following things now.

- The school looks carefully at how well you are doing in lessons. It must use this information more to plan work that is just right for each one of you, neither too easy nor too hard. This will help you all to make the best progress possible.
- The teachers need to help you become aware of how well you are doing and how you could do even better. Marking, personal targets to aim for, and more opportunities for you to talk about how well you are doing in lessons, would all help.
- The school has plans to help you all do even better in school. It must check that these plans are working, so that your lessons are both challenging and enjoyable and that you all do as well as you can during your time at school.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector