

Broadfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135339
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	329084
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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)	450
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 Rachel Keil
Headteacher	Mr Derek Heasman
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Windmill Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 4BX
Telephone number	01442 426300
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Broadfield Primary School is much larger than the majority of primary schools. This is the first time the school has been inspected. It opened, at the instigation of the governor body, in January 2008 following the closure of Broadfield Infants' and Broadfield Junior School. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and Reception classes. At the moment when children start in the Nursery their attainment is close to that expected for their age. Although in the past, several year groups have started with attainment that was below that expected, especially in language, literacy and communication. The percentage of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups and the percentage who speak English as an additional language is lower than usually found, although in both cases numbers are rising steadily. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average and comprises mainly of pupils with specific learning difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties. The percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.

The school shares its site with the Windmill children's centre, for which the school has lead agency responsibility. The school's work has attracted a number of national awards; these include: The Healthy Schools Award, Activemark Gold, Investors in People and a gold award for the school travel plan.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Broadfield Primary is a good school that has many improving features. Strong and effective leadership and management has brought together a team of staff who are dedicated to ensuring that pupils are able to do their best and excel. There are some aspects of the school's work that are exemplary. For instance, community cohesion is excellent and is exemplified by the ways in which the school embraces pupils and their families from other cultures and beliefs and enables them to flourish. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given an excellent start to school life. In this respect the school builds exceptionally well on the work of the Windmill children's centre that shares the site. Links with partner schools, such as the secondary school to which the majority of pupils go when they leave, are excellent as are links with local businesses and external agencies that support pupils' progress. This is a school which rightly places a high priority on pupils' personal and social development. The 'Broadfield Way', is familiar to all and is at the heart of the school's ethos. Parents, carers and the community hold the school in high regard for the quality of its work. One parent commented, 'I think Broadfield is a great school', another said, 'My son has progressed brilliantly. His teachers have been fantastic and very approachable'. Teaching and learning are good and teachers work tirelessly to ensure that pupils enjoy their education. Consequently, from their below average starting points pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 achieve well and standards at the end of these years are broadly average.

Some outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection in which learning was interesting and exciting. In a minority of lessons, teachers sometimes talk for too long and, while pupils maintain their interest, the pace of learning tends to slacken. The procedures for setting targets for pupils' learning usually work well, but there are times when the targets are group based and do not address the needs of each individual as closely as they might. Similarly teachers sometimes set learning objectives that are very general, applying them to the whole class rather than targeting groups or tailoring them specifically to individual need. The curriculum is good. Excellent use is made of the school grounds as a vehicle for learning. For example, many classes help to maintain the gardens and pupils are very proud of the produce they grow. The standards pupils attain, their excellent social skills and their involvement in industry and commerce means they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for the future.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. As a result of this pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exemplary. Their behaviour is excellent. The tracking of pupils' progress is good and any who are at risk of falling behind are spotted at an early stage and supportive actions quickly put in place. The track record of the headteacher, senior staff and governors in making improvements to provision and in raising standards is such that the school's capacity to maintain improvements in the future is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

From their various starting points children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make exceptional progress to attain above average levels in several areas of learning, such as personal and social development, reading, creative and physical development. The historically low level of language and communication skills found on entry to the Nursery is steadily improving as a result of the school's work with the onsite children's centre and liaison with local playgroups.

Behaviour and relationships are excellent and exceptional organisation of the learning areas mean that children are clearly happy and excited by their learning. They discover the wonder of watching butterflies hatching and being released into the wild and eagerly write letters and post them in the letter box. All children are engaged in highly stimulating activities which promote independence across all areas of their learning. Their work and play in Nursery prepares them for making well informed choices in the Reception classes. The open, friendly encouragement of parents to support their children's learning provides an exceptionally firm foundation for children's future progress. Their individual needs are recognised and excellent liaison with support agencies helps the school to provide for their well-being.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has high aspirations for improving the learning experiences of the children. Well qualified adults are organised very effectively and have a high level of skill in developing children's learning within the child-initiated activities. The good liaison and ongoing assessment of children's learning ensures that staff are highly competent in extending their skills and understanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the best practice to make all lessons interesting and exciting in order to eliminate those occasions when the pace of pupils' progress slackens.
- Modify the processes for setting learning objectives and targets for pupils so that they give greater consideration to pupils' prior learning and are tailored more closely to their individual learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Teacher assessments for 2008 showed that standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average. However, pupils did not do as well in mathematics as they did in reading and writing. The school's concerted focus on mental arithmetic for this age group has brought improvements. Teacher assessments and the work in pupils' books show that standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average, but rising. The annual national tests in 2008 resulted in broadly average standards for the end of Year 6. Even so, standards in English lagged behind those in mathematics and science. Again a carefully structured focus on pupils' writing has brought improvements. While standards in English are still broadly average the work in pupils' books shows they have made good progress from below average starting points. Steady improvement is also evident in mathematics and science where the initial analysis of test results for 2009 shows standards in both subjects are broadly average, but are better than in 2008. The rate of progress has also improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who joined the school relatively late in their primary education also make good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language are supported well and they also make good progress. The current Year 5 and Year 1 pupils are already on course to attain standards that are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's concerted efforts have significantly improved attendance which is now good. Behaviour is outstanding which reflects their moral development. Their excellent spiritual development is exemplified by their enthusiasm for music and their considered reflection in assemblies. Pupils love to be involved in the running of the school and are eager to take

responsibilities; for example in fulfilling roles such as school councillors. Pupils' have an exceptional understanding of other cultures and beliefs and the school operates as a harmonious community. All children enjoy their lessons because 'teachers make our lessons fun' and they love the opportunities for playing with their friends. They reflect well on their learning and have highly developed skills in working independently.

Pupils have a high degree of commitment to maintaining healthy lifestyles by participating in two hours of physical education each week. The wide variety of extra-curricular activities give all pupils opportunities to access sporting, social and academic skills from a range of experts. Healthy eating is promoted very well through the excellent healthy meals and the involvement of parents in creating healthy packed lunches. Pupils are responsible for organising and managing the school fruit shop.

The school's commitment to ensuring that its pupils have the skills to stay safe is exemplary. The range of external experts including the police, fire service and community agents raises pupil's awareness of how to resist the appeal of unsafe practices. Pupils raise funds for resources and give to charity. They feel that they are able to influence improvements to the school. This is exemplified by having recently raised a significant amount of money for playground markings and the school library.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Activities are planned that meet the full range of needs and abilities in each class well. For example; within mixed ability classes pupils are grouped by ability; in Key Stage 1 pupils are taught the sounds made by letters and words in groups based on ability; in Year 6 pupils are 'set' by ability for English and mathematics. These approaches are proving to be effective and the rate at which pupils' progress is increasing. The school grounds are used very effectively to provide a setting for practical activities that make learning come alive and capture pupils' enthusiasm. Teachers take a consistently positive approach to encouraging pupils by celebrating their successes. This gives pupils the confidence to do their best. Pupils are very willing to answer questions. Some do not find this easy, but there is a clear focus on improving their speaking and listening skills that is steadily paying dividends and leading to rising standards in English.

Teachers assess pupils' progress carefully and regularly. The school is justifiably proud of the work it has done to develop assessment procedures and its work in this respect has received wide recognition. Even so, teachers are aware of the need to focus learning objectives and targets even more closely on pupils' individual learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets pupils' learning needs and allows the pupils to achieve well. Since the school's opening the curriculum has been modified significantly to provide a more integrated and practical approach to learning. Further revisions are planned and the curriculum is under constant review in an effort to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils. Many foundation subjects are taught through topics in Key Stage 1 which helps pupils to link together their learning in different subjects. Special focus weeks, such as the 'Environment Week' and 'Feeling

Good Week', are well received by pupils. The school provides a good range of enrichment opportunities with visits and a range of visitors to the school, widening pupils' knowledge and understanding of subjects and broadening their view of the world around them. Additional club activities, including over twenty out-of-hours' clubs, cater for the interests of the pupils and support both their academic learning and personal development. The Year 4 school journey and the Year 6 camping residential to the Forest of Dean contribute very effectively to pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. All the requirements for child protection are in place. The pastoral support for pupils and their families is particularly strong. Support for pupils, who for a variety of reasons, sometimes find learning difficult is outstanding. The school recognises and celebrates the achievements of those who have special talents. Recently, these have included pupils who have been very successful in activities such as judo and trampolining.

Teachers track pupils' progress and their response to any shortfalls is effective and well-organised. Regular pupil progress meetings show that underachieving pupils, with intervention, recover lost ground and make the progress expected of them. The school's 'Inco' (inclusion officer) has a key role in this. Progress is tracked in all subjects, not just the traditional 'big three', core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Consequently teachers have a full understanding of the strengths of each pupil.

The school provides significant support for parents in assisting them to help their children learn and in developing English language skills for those who would like help. Pupils and their parents and carers are consulted frequently and have overwhelmingly positive views about the school. Links with external support agencies are excellent and make a positive contribution to pupils' progress. Links with local industry are also excellent. One company has recently undertaken to provide each pupil with a reading book for the school summer holidays.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior and middle managers have specific areas of responsibility, such as assessment, and their skills are helping to move the school forward rapidly. Under the good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher this team has introduced many changes that have improved the quality of provision; such as the work to raise standards in writing and mathematics. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have skilfully identified priorities for improvement. They are highly competent in monitoring and evaluation, in identifying the most important things that need to be done and in taking action to bring about improvements. Subject leaders are having a positive impact on the quality of provision and on pupils' progress. Realistic, but suitably challenging targets are set for attainment. The school is clearly committed to the continued professional development of staff and this is impacting positively by raising the proportion of good teaching.

Governors do a good job. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, as well as giving support to the school's excellent provision for community cohesion. The school is at the heart of its community and does much to embrace the full range of cultures

and beliefs. This includes supporting language development for parents and carers. Last year a very successful Pakistani evening was held, which this year is extending to become an international evening.

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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	NA
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	2

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	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**

1 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broadfield Primary School, Hemel Hempstead HP2 4BX

You may recall that Ms Richmond, Miss Pentlow and I recently visited to inspect your school. We must thank you all for the help you gave us and for giving up your time to tell us all about your school. Because of this we know that you and your parents and carers think that your school is good. For all sorts of reasons we agree with you. Lots of things about your school impressed us, for instance those of you who are learning to play the ukulele, do so brilliantly.

Mr Heasman and the staff work very hard to make sure you are happy and safe at school. They also provide you with lots of exciting and interesting things to do. As a result you make good progress. The standards you attain are steadily getting better and are on course to be above average before too long. You can help this to happen by continuing to work as hard as you do at the present time. For your part we think your behaviour is excellent. We are very impressed by your willingness to take responsibility, to do jobs around the school and to help and support each other. We are particularly impressed by the welcome you provide for children who are new to the school, which helps them to settle in and feel at home.

The school governors, Mr Heasman and the staff are always looking for ways of making your school even better. With that in mind we are asking them to:

- make all your lessons as interesting and exciting as the best ones and ensure that you are always learning and making progress as rapidly as you possibly can
- set learning objectives and targets for your attainment that consider all the things you have done in the past and are matched as closely as possible to what you need to do next.

We would like to wish you all the very best for the future, especially those of you who will shortly be moving on to secondary school.

Yours faithfully

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead inspector