

Brookfield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118869
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	331606
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheena MacDonald HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Richardson
Headteacher	Mrs M J Blewer
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at assessment and pupil tracking information, teachers' planning and curriculum overviews. They also viewed monitoring of teaching and learning evaluations, safeguarding records and related policies and governor meeting minutes

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of strategies for improvement in tackling areas of weakness, raising standards and increasing the rate of pupils' progress
- the quality of teaching and learning, the effectiveness of planning to match different abilities and provide challenge in lessons
- the use of assessment to identify and tackle areas of weakness
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels, the accuracy of self-evaluation and planning in identifying needs, setting challenging targets and driving improvement.

Information about the school

Brookfield is an average sized junior school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen in recent years. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased and is now just above the average. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased in recent years and is above average. Most of those pupils have moderate learning difficulties and a few have emotional and behavioural needs. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school provides a breakfast club and shares its site with three other schools. The school has achieved the Healthy School award and Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Brookfield Junior School is now a satisfactory school. Parents, pupils and staff all comment on significant improvements which have taken place since the last inspection. The school has successfully maintained its areas of strength including the rigorous attention to ensuring pupils' safety, care and pastoral support. Aspects of pupils' personal development also remain strong. Pupils behave well, are healthy, happy and rightly confident that their views are valued and that they make a good contribution to their school and community.

Raising standards and increasing the rate of pupil progress were previously the areas where the most significant improvement was required. Last year's end of Key Stage 2 assessment tests were disappointing and show that there remains a legacy of underachievement. However, improvements in the quality of teaching and a relentless focus on improving learning have resulted in at least satisfactory progress across the school and all groups. Many pupils are now making good progress. The school's assessment systems are used very effectively to track individuals and groups and assessment information is used effectively to plan teaching and learning. Despite these improvements, standards are still not high enough and there is more to be done to bring about the sustained accelerated progress necessary, particularly in the older age groups and in writing, to make up for past weaknesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is now good. This important improvement is the key reason for the increases in attainment and progress. Behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes excellent and pupils are keen to do well. Lessons are well organised, have clear objectives and there is a strong focus on what learning pupils are expected to achieve. The quality of marking and feedback has improved so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. Although most lessons are good and some teachers demonstrate excellent skills, for example in their use of questions to develop and extend the pupils' learning, some inconsistencies remain. In some lessons there is too much emphasis on what the adults will be doing and not enough attention paid to the quality and quantity of work that pupils can and should be producing. Generally, not enough attention is paid to presentation or accuracy so that, for example, often pupils record key vocabulary incorrectly.

There has been an understandable emphasis on making sure that work in the core subjects is appropriately covered and as a result, although the curriculum is satisfactory, there are too few opportunities for pupils to become inspired and excited by learning or

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to develop an understanding of cultural diversity.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but the leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. The headteacher's rigorous monitoring and determined tackling of underperformance have resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and rising levels of attainment and progress. Good external support has been used well and the staff have demonstrated that they are willing, capable and have an appetite for improvement. The recently strengthened leadership team has a clear sense of purpose and ambition and is working well to increase the rate of improvement. The inspection team and the school agree with the parent who commented, 'The school has improved over the past year but there is room for further improvement.' The achievements since the last inspection indicate that the school has the capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in English, especially writing, mathematics and science by raising expectations about the quality, quantity and accuracy of pupils' work.
- Use the current expertise to improve the proportion of good and better lessons.
- Broaden and enrich the curriculum to support pupils' progress in spiritual and cultural development, and increase their enjoyment and excitement in learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, pupils were interested, attentive and made good progress. A strong focus on learning means that pupils as well as teachers understand what they need to do to demonstrate good learning. There are clear links between assessment and lesson planning so that activities and support are well targeted to address pupils' different learning needs. In most lessons pupils are involved in evaluating their learning and although this is still at an early stage in some classes in others it is developing very well indeed.

The end of Key Stage 2 results have been consistently low over time, as has the rate of progress made by all pupil groups, and this remained the case for last year's Year 6 class. Although these pupils made satisfactory progress over the year this was not enough to eradicate the effect of previous underachievement. The school's own rigorous assessment systems and the work in pupils' books show clearly that improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school are resulting in all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, making at least satisfactory progress with many making good progress. A focus on improving mathematics has been particularly successful but attainment in writing remains a key area requiring further improvement.

Although some parents and pupils express continuing concern about behaviour, both groups also comment on the improvements over the past year. High expectations and consistent, positive behaviour management mean that behaviour is good in and out of lessons. This is a 'healthy school' and pupils have a good understanding of what

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constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle. High numbers take part in the school's physical activity clubs and increasing numbers now walk to school. Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities. For example, they monitor the walking bus, train to be peer mentors and older children pair up with Year 2 pupils to help them with transition. Pupils have a real voice in the school and make decisions not only about which charities to support but also about some matters of school organisation and direction. Attainment in important basic skills such as literacy and numeracy is still not high enough which means that despite recent improvements, and good attendance rates, the extent to which pupils develop workplace skills is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also satisfactory. Social and moral development is stronger but, although there are some opportunities for pupils to explore cultural understanding through music, art and drama, their understanding of their own and other cultures is not as well developed. Similarly, there are too few opportunities to experience excitement in learning or to reflect on deeper issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The quality of teaching and learning improved greatly over the past year and continues to improve. Now all lessons are consistently well planned with a focus on learning and activities designed to match the different ability groups. In most lessons this match is good, providing both challenge and support. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their own thinking, speaking and listening skills. Although most of the teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good there is still some satisfactory teaching and learning and very little that is outstanding. The main reasons for this are that expectations are not high enough regarding accuracy and quality of presentation. On occasions, over direction by adults means that the learning challenge is limited, there is less time for pupils to work at length and missed opportunities for adults to assess what pupils are learning during lessons. However, the school has excellent examples of teaching skills and is well placed to share and develop these across all classes.

Assessment information is used well to identify areas of weakness, target additional support and also to inform everyday lesson planning. The use of assessment during lessons is good with, in the main, clear targets for success which pupils understand and are able to match to their own learning. Links between objectives, marking and feedback and next steps for learning are generally good and sometimes excellent. Teachers are involving pupils in evaluating and reflecting on their learning as a matter of course, although the effectiveness of this varies.

The curriculum meets the learning needs of different ability groups and planning is consistent across age groups to make sure that the different subjects are covered. Increasingly valuable links are being made between the learning in different subjects and this is resulting in good quality work such as the diaries of evacuees written by Year 6 pupils. The focus on basic skills means that although there are some good opportunities for enrichment through special themed events, the everyday curriculum is somewhat limited with few opportunities for finding out about the wider world or activities which spark pupils' excitement in learning. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to be enthralled by their learning and therefore limits the potential for outstanding teaching, learning and progress.

The school knows its pupils very well. Every pupil in the pupil survey expressed confidence that the adults in school care for them. There are robust systems for ensuring the health and safety of all pupils. Systems to identify, support and monitor the progress of vulnerable pupils are similarly strong. The work of staff members such as the family liaison officer supports the involvement of parents, including those from traditionally hard to reach groups. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving with the introduction of more rigorous evaluation of interventions and more sharply targeted support for their learning. The school also makes effective use of partnerships to access external expertise such as speech and language support and play therapy. There are good arrangements to welcome pupils into the school and to support their transition on to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, are the result of sharp and determined actions taken by the headteacher, an increasingly strong senior leadership team and good support from the local authority. There is clarity of purpose and direction and the staff have responded well to the challenge. Monitoring of lessons, teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books has been thorough and effective. Weaknesses and underperformance have been identified, support and challenge provided and followed up to make sure that improvements are taking place. Assessment of pupils' performance is rigorous and used well to target resources and whole-school action taken to deal with weaknesses, for example in mathematics. As a result, features of good teaching and learning, such as planning for all abilities, useful marking and positive behaviour management, are consistent across the school. There is more to do to raise expectations about what pupils can and should be achieving in each lesson. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is well aware that there is much more to do. Challenging targets are in place and there are sharp, well-targeted plans for further improvement and all staff are increasingly well motivated and accountable.

The school puts a high priority on ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. As a result, its systems are good and rigorously implemented. All checks and vetting procedures are rigorous, training is comprehensive and up to date, including training to enable adults and peer mediators to support those who need to speak out or confide in someone.

Other aspects of leadership and management are satisfactory. Having tackled some major internal weaknesses the school now begins to look outwards and build on its current partnerships, such as those which are developing well with parents, the infant school and with other local schools. The school is able to identify groups and individuals who are not achieving as well as they should and goes some way to reducing the barriers to achievement, such as adapting the lessons to better promote different ways of learning; this is particularly important in some classes with very high numbers of boys. The school works well to promote community cohesion within the school itself and to some extent with the local area. However, pupils' understanding and celebration of the diversity of the wider world are less well developed.

Governors have been closely involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's progress. They are developing well, provide appropriate support and are beginning to be

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able to act as the school's critical friend. They are increasingly well informed and have benefited from local authority training and additional governor expertise brought in to support the school following the last inspection.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Fifty-six parents or carers returned questionnaires to the inspection team and one telephoned the inspection provider with additional comments. The vast majority of parents are satisfied with the school. A pupil questionnaire confirmed this high degree of satisfaction with all aspects scoring highly. Some positive written comments were added to the parental questionnaires and many of those were about the improvements seen since the last inspection, the care and approachability of the staff and how happy their children were in school. There were also some mixed and some negative responses. Both pupils and parents had some concerns about behaviour, some parents were concerned about their children's rate of progress and a few expressed concerns about how well the school catered for the individual needs of their children. The majority of negative comments came from parents with children in the older classes which may reflect concerns about past weaknesses and the impact of these on their children's achievement and well-being. The inspection team found that the school was very aware of and determined to address areas of weakness.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brookfield Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	41	26	46	5	9	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	26	46	28	50	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	25	35	63	4	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	23	35	63	7	13	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	16	29	34	61	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	29	29	52	7	13	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	23	36	64	7	13	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	30	27	48	7	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	25	32	57	8	14	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	27	28	50	5	9	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	23	32	57	6	11	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	16	29	28	50	7	13	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	30	29	52	6	11	3	5

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookfield Junior School, Larkfield, Aylesford, ME20 6PY

I visited your school recently with other inspectors to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and welcoming, especially those of you who gave up your playtime to talk to us.

When your school was last inspected the inspectors decided that things were not right and it was given what we call 'a notice to improve'. Everyone, including you and your parents, told us that your school has improved. After having a very close look at all sorts of things, including coming into lots of lessons, we agree. Well done! Your school is now satisfactory and some important things are good.

You are developing into sensible, helpful young people who know how to stay safe and healthy. You behave well and sometimes in lessons your behaviour is excellent. The adults take really good care of you and make sure you are safe. Your teachers plan good lessons and they take care to make sure the learning is at the right level for you. They involve you in this so you know how well you are doing and what you need to do next. The leaders in your school keep a very close eye on everything! They know how well you are doing, what needs to improve and they have worked hard with all the staff to make sure everyone is on the right track.

We think, and your school agrees, that although things have improved there is still a lot more to do to make it even better. For example, the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science are still not good enough. We have asked your teachers to expect even more of you both in terms of how much you do and how good your work is, especially in writing. We think you can rise to this challenge! Your teachers are really good at different things so we have asked them to share their ideas so that more lessons can be as good as the best. We have also asked them to liven up the curriculum a bit so there are more opportunities for learning about the wider world and more exciting activities.

We could see that everyone in your school, including you, wants the school to carry on improving so, well done so far and good luck for the next part of the Brookfield story.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald HMI

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