

Brambleside Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130963
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	331616
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	308
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	Bill Parker
Headteacher	Sue Peel
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cleveland Avenue Kettering NN16 9JG
Telephone number	01536 310680

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Inspection number	331616

Fax number

01536 310681

Age group	4-11
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Inspection dates	1-2 July 2009
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Inspection number	331616
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Brambleside Community Primary School is a larger than average primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below the national averages. The percentage of those whose first language is not English is just below the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception classes. The school has received the following awards in recognition of its work: Healthy School, Investor in People, Artsmark Gold, Eco Schools, the Activemark and the Financial Management Standards in Schools.

The school was inspected 30 June and 1 July 2008 and given a notice to improve because it was performing less well than could reasonably be expected. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors monitored the school's progress in January 2009. The school was judged to be making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement. Governors appointed two new class teachers in September 2008. To cover the deputy headteacher's absence, governors appointed an acting deputy headteacher from within the school. There have also been two further additions to the school's middle leadership team.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Brambleside Community Primary school is a satisfactory school. It has some good and outstanding features in pupils' personal development and well-being and the Early Years Foundation Stage. 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.

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked in partnership with staff, governors and local authority advisors and consultants to improve provision. The headteacher has led improvements with enthusiasm and resolve and has been well supported by staff and governors. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory as is the school's capacity to improve further. The senior leadership team regularly reviews pupils' progress and monitors and evaluates the work of the school. Middle leaders are also increasing their involvement in keeping a check on the performance of pupils in the subjects for which they hold responsibility. Senior staff and middle leaders provide staff with sound feedback including details of the actions which need to be taken to raise achievement. However, monitoring is not always rigorous and leaders do not always check quickly enough to see if actions have been consistently implemented by staff throughout the school. This is leading to inconsistencies in the school's provision and the progress made by pupils.

Children's skills on entry to Reception vary from year to year but are generally in line with those expected for their age. Children make good progress overall in Reception and begin Year 1 with levels of attainment that are above those normally expected. Pupils' work and the school's assessment information show achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall and some pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics. Although an increasing proportion of pupils are attaining standards that are above and sometimes well above those expected for their age, there are variations between subjects and groups of pupils. For example, girls in Key Stage 2 perform better in writing than boys and the more able pupils do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable. By the time pupils leave the school standards are above average.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Pupils achieve particularly well when they have the opportunity to take part in practical tasks that encourage them to solve problems, investigate and find out for themselves. Progress also accelerates when staff clearly explain and demonstrate the strategies pupils will need to use in order to complete their work successfully. However, this effective practice is not consistent throughout the school. In too many lessons, pupils are not given the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning. Although teachers have access to a wide range of assessment information, this is not always used well. As a consequence, the activities for different groups of pupils do not always provide a sufficient level of challenge. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers' marking is positive but does not always provide pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work or meet their targets. Pupils know their targets but are not yet fully involved in setting and reviewing their targets. Pupils receive a good level of care which underpins their good personal development. They behave well and are polite, welcoming and eager to talk about the school and their work. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They participate in a wide range of sporting activities with enthusiasm. In the school's garden area pupils grow, harvest and sell vegetables and also encourage their families to grow vegetables at home. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils particularly enjoy the good range of visits and enrichment activities which enhance the satisfactory curriculum. During the inspection, Years 3 and 4 pupils took part in an Aztec

morning. They had the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of Mexican and Aztec culture through music, dance and stories.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent gains in their personal and creative development. This is because staff provide children with a range of activities that encourage them to work together, become independent, and use their imagination to explore their surroundings. A child explained, 'I am an astronaut on the moon!' Another commented, 'We are designing our own rocket ship so we can go into space.' Children make good progress in other areas of learning. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Staff make effective use of the assessment information they gather during observations to plan a good range of activities both in and out of doors. During independent activities, children do not always have the opportunity to enhance their literacy and mathematical skills. This is because the independent activities that staff plan for these areas do not always capture the children's interest. Staff promote children's welfare extremely well. Strong links with parents and external agencies ensure children settle in quickly and are safe. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The teachers and teaching assistants work together well and regularly discuss the individual performance of children. As a result, they have a good understanding of individual children's strengths and what they need to do to improve further. The headteacher is aware that staff do not yet systematically record and analyse the progress made by different groups of children in all six areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a consistently good rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school by making sure that activities for pupils provide an appropriate level of challenge and give them the opportunity to take greater responsibility for their learning.
- Ensure that pupils are clear about how they can improve their work and that they play a more active role in setting and reviewing their own targets.
- Further develop leadership and management at all levels by ensuring monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is prompt and rigorous and leads to good progress for all groups of pupils.

A small proportion of 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' achievement is satisfactory and improving as a result of better provision and positive developments in the tracking of pupils' progress. Performance in mathematics, for instance, has improved because of a whole-school focus on problem solving and the way in which staff teach mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able achieve as well as other pupils. Targeted support and catch up programmes have had a particularly beneficial impact in Year 6. The percentage of pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age in this year group has increased from the previous year, particularly in mathematics. The school is aware that variations in performance remain. For instance, boys do not always perform as well as girls and performance in reading is better than in writing. As a consequence, standards

in the school range from broadly average and are above the national average by end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they feel very safe. They have been involved in a number of local safety issues, including a local road safety campaign. Projects such as this give pupils an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. As play leaders and playground buddies they effectively promote the safety of others. Through the work of the school council and fund raising activities, pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The school has secure plans in place to increase pupils' involvement in the development of the school and the local community. Attendance is good. However, despite the school's best efforts to promote regular attendance, the number of families taking holidays during term time is high. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and particularly when lessons are practical and interesting. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Satisfactory progress in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) means pupils are adequately prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall and some is good and outstanding. Examples of successful practice include activities which challenge and inspire and opportunities for pupils to work together and talk to each other about their work. In one highly effective lesson, pupils worked diligently and with enthusiasm to develop their painting skills using a variety of techniques. The teacher gave pupils the chance to review their own and each others' using success criteria. As a result, pupils were able to self-evaluate their work and identify what they needed to do to improve. However, this effective practice is not yet widespread. The pace of learning slows when teachers spend too long talking to the whole class. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to find out for themselves. In some lessons, the level of pupils' interest and enthusiasm is not as good as it could be, because the activities do not sufficiently challenge and inspire pupils. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning when they work with individuals and groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Since the last inspection staff have reviewed and refined the curriculum. They have developed a whole-school curriculum map which clearly outlines the subjects and topics to be taught in each year group. Provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT has improved and is now satisfactory. Nevertheless, individual teachers' planning does not always build successfully on learning from the previous year. Consequently, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress overall. Pupils say they enjoy school, particularly because of the good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities that are offered. During the dance club for instance, pupils were observed learning a range of dance movements and performing to different types of music. One pupil commented, 'This is fun.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

One parent wrote, 'My daughter has grown into a happy more confident child.' Pupils feel so safe because the care and support they receive from staff is good. Partnerships with a range of outside agencies are strong. As a result, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive the individual support they need. At the time of the inspection, all statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection procedures were in place. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of their targets. However, they are not sufficiently involved in reviewing them and are not clear about how to achieve them. This is because teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always provide pupils with the guidance they need. Although the majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the school, a small minority raised concerns about communication between home and school. Staff and governors are rightly looking at ways in which they can further improve links between parents and the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked with determination since the previous inspection to improve pupils' progress and raise standards. The headteacher has established a common sense of purpose. With effective support from the local authority, the school has established secure systems for checking pupils' progress. These include regular meetings with staff to discuss the progress of pupils and decide upon the actions to be taken to accelerate progress. The school's self-evaluation is sound but too generous. This is because monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is not sufficiently rigorous or prompt enough. For example, lesson observations focus too much on the mechanics of teaching and not enough on pupils' learning. Middle managers are keen and enthusiastic and are developing their roles in monitoring and evaluating performance for their areas of responsibility. Although senior staff set challenging targets, the impact of this has yet to be seen in all year groups. Teachers are not making best use of this assessment information to inform their planning. Governance is good. Governors regularly monitor and evaluate the work of the school. They have interviewed pupils, visited classrooms, met with staff and are asking challenging questions. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Through events such as international week pupils learn about other overseas communities. During this week, each class represents a country and every child receives a 'passport' so that they can visit each country.

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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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	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**

2 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Brambleside Community Primary School, Kettering NN16 9JG

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We would like to thank you for sharing with us your views about the school, your work and your lessons. We would like to say a special thank you to all the pupils who came to talk to us and the children in the dance club who performed for us.

Brambleside is a satisfactory school and it has some good and outstanding features. Mrs Peel, the staff and governors have worked hard to improve your school. Your good behaviour and enthusiastic attitude towards learning have also helped.

- Here is what we found.
- You are polite, well mannered and take good care of each other.
- The children in the Reception class make good and, in some things, outstanding progress. We could see how much the children in Reception were enjoying exploring the moon and making soup for aliens.
- You enjoy visiting different places and learn a lot from the visitors who come to the school. The children taking part in the Aztec morning were certainly enjoying learning about the Aztecs.
- You have a brilliant understanding of how to stay healthy. We were impressed with your garden and all the vegetables that you grow.

We have asked Mrs Peel and the staff to help you reach even higher standards by giving you work that is just right for you in reading, writing and mathematics. We have also asked the teachers to give you activities that will give you the opportunity to find out things for yourself. We were really pleased to hear that you knew your targets. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they tell you how to achieve your targets and involve you in setting and reviewing them. Finally, we have asked the teachers with responsibilities and governors to carefully keep checking that everything is as good as it can be. I am sure that with the positive attitudes you have that you will help your teachers and all the adults in your school to make it even better.

Thank you once again to all the teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, the site manager, governors and you for making our two days so enjoyable. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Usha Devi Her Majesty's Inspector