

Brook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103778
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	336154
Inspection dates	14–15 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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

The registered childcare provision, 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 of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dana Newey
Headteacher	Ms Lynn Cartwright
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2007
School address	George Street Wordsley Stourbridge
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Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	14–15 December 2009
Inspection number	336154

Registered childcare provision	Brook Street Primary School
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	40
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, planning, assessment data and pupils' work. They analysed the questionnaires returned by 136 parents, 175 pupils and 31 members of staff.

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

- the impact of the work of leaders, managers and governors on raising standards, particularly in writing
- the quality of self-evaluation, to see whether current priorities are based on rigorous monitoring and the accurate analysis of data
- the achievement of pupils at Key Stage 2, particularly the more able, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently effective in accelerating their progress.

Information about the school

Brook Primary is a large school serving an urban area. The vast majority of pupils have a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, some have speech, language and communication difficulties, and a few have behavioural or emotional problems. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes 54 children of Nursery age (over three years of age) funded by the government and 60 children of Reception age (over four years of age) integrated in one unit. The school has achieved the Investors in People standard and national awards including the ICT Mark, the Arts Mark and the Healthy Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy, staff display a shared determination to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. Parents hold the school in high regard. Among many favourable comments were, 'I cannot imagine a better environment for our daughter,' and, 'I wholeheartedly believe the school has the best interests of all children at heart.'

The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating, and pupils participate eagerly in lessons and extra activities. Teachers make lessons interesting so pupils sustain their enthusiasm and involvement. As a result, pupils achieve well in all year groups. From a low start as they enter the school, pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Meticulous tracking of pupils' progress shows that some of the more able pupils are not doing as well as they might in literacy and numeracy. Good headway has been made in addressing this issue but it rightly remains a school priority, especially as tasks set in lessons do not always reflect the best use of assessment information on individuals to ensure that pupils progressively build up their skills. Children's language skills as they start school are generally very weak. Effective teaching enables them to make good progress, although pupils' skills in reading are better than those in writing by the end of Year 6. The school is not making the most of opportunities across different subjects to consolidate and extend writing skills, or using focused targets for individuals to support this process.

Teachers are skilled in broadening pupils' horizons, helping them believe in themselves and developing their self-esteem. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes, behave extremely well and show a pride in their school. A wealth of enrichment activities contribute to their academic and personal development. Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties and those who are facing personal problems receive excellent support.

A concerted effort by senior staff and governors to move the school forward has meant that good headway has been made since the last inspection. The school is well placed to improve further. A rigorous system of self-review underpins all decision making and development planning. The school's inclusive ethos means that all pupils are welcomed. The school successfully promotes community cohesion and helps pupils to gain insights into the similar values and ambitions shared by children from diverse communities within and outside the United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help pupils, particular the more able, to make faster progress in English and

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mathematics by sharing good practice so that all teachers are skilled in planning work which builds on pupils' prior learning.

- Raise the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - identifying further opportunities for them to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills during cross-curricular studies
 - fully establishing the inclusion of targets relating to pupils' language skills during such work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The quality of learning observed in lessons during the inspection was consistently good for all age groups, and the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirmed the school's own analysis of pupils making good progress in all key stages. Most meet or exceed their challenging targets, year on year. As a result of the school's success in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with social/emotional problems, a number of new pupils join the school partway through Key Stage 2 each year. Nevertheless, by Year 6, overall standards have remained broadly average, and pupils in the current Year 5 and Year 6 are on course to reach higher standards by the end of Key Stage 2 than in previous years. Pupils from all ability groups generally do well in lessons, although the work set for them is not always sufficiently tailored to individual needs to ensure that more able pupils, for example, are challenged to reach the high standards they are capable of. This was seen to be holding back some pupils' work in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils enjoy school; as one Year 6 pupil said, 'We love this school and don't want our time here to end.' The vast majority of pupils attend well but a few families keep their children at home for no good reason. Pupils respect others and value their own achievements. They develop into mature young citizens as they progress through the school. Relationships are excellent and pupils say that the school is a very friendly place. They develop a good understanding of other cultures, particularly through inter-school activities alongside pupils from diverse backgrounds. A well-established link with a school in Uganda involves exchange visits by staff. Pupils' knowledge of healthy lifestyles is good and pupils value the healthy lunches and make good use of the opportunities to take part in physical activities. The school council and the 'eco warriors' are successful in bringing about improvements, such as contributing ideas for the playground and establishing a recycling scheme. Pupils feel safe in school. They say that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. 'Playground pals' support pupils who are lonely or upset and pupils say that they can turn to adults if they are troubled. Pupils make good progress in their basic skills and work well both independently and cooperatively. Through organising fundraising events, enterprise projects and learning about the world of work, for example from a visiting chef, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons, assessment information is used to pinpoint precisely the next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers, for the most part, set work pitched at the right level of challenge for different ability groups, and lessons move at a lively pace. During a mathematics lesson in Year 6, for example, the whole class was buzzing with activity. Pupils discussed their own strategies for finding equivalent fractions, percentages and decimals and compared their solutions. This approach is evident across the school. Pupils increasingly assess their own progress. At the start of each lesson, teachers make clear the objectives. These are reinforced by 'learning ladders' and individual targets, which help to remind pupils of the next steps. Teachers provide good feedback and encouragement when marking work and during lessons. Partway through a lesson about metaphors in Year 3/4, for example, pupils shared their ideas with the rest of the class, including, 'Shadows are ghosts of the earth', 'Rocks are the eyes of the forest', and 'Branches are the claws'. This prompted other pupils to follow suit and all made good progress. Occasionally, pupils' learning is constrained because they find the work too difficult or too easy, or are unclear about the precise success criteria when tackling new work.

The development of a creative curriculum has enthused both staff and pupils and is having a positive impact on learning and achievement. Through topics such as the Second World War, teachers are effectively planning activities across a range of subjects

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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such as history, geography, art and design technology to systematically develop pupils' knowledge and skills. However, the school recognises that the good practice has not yet been shared and embraced by all staff, especially with regard to building in more opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and extend their literacy skills during integrated topics. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities such as residential visits, school productions and after-school clubs. These have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Good use of specialists, for example in French and music, helps pupils develop their skills. All Year 3 pupils learn the violin, and they delighted in showing how well they had progressed in their first term.

The school has the well-being of its pupils at the centre of all its work. In the safe and secure environment, pupils are given the confidence to take responsibility and tackle new challenges, knowing that staff will help them overcome any difficulties they may have. Pupils in vulnerable circumstances are given outstanding support and the school works closely with outside agencies to ensure they receive specialist advice and guidance. Through early identification of difficulties, targeted support and careful tracking of their progress, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. The skilled team of teaching assistants plays a major role in this. The school pays close attention to health and safety. The breakfast club and after-school care provide opportunities for children to play and relax. Flexible day care for children over two years of age is well organised and is much appreciated by parents. An extended service across 48 weeks of the year is provided for all age groups. The school has received a Mencap award for its provision for disabled children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher plays a pivotal role in inspiring staff, pupils and parents. In tandem with the deputy headteacher, she guides the leadership team, some of whom are relatively new, extremely well. A significant strength is the rigour with which senior staff analyse assessment information, monitor the quality of teaching and draw on the views of pupils and parents in setting priorities. Governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are robust, and visit the school regularly to gain first hand information from discussions with senior leaders and from informal observations. They acknowledge that they could play a stronger role in setting the strategic direction of the school but, working closely with the headteacher, governors gain an understanding of the school's

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strengths and areas for development. There has been significant progress on several fronts, including greater consistency in teaching, more effective learning and accelerated achievement. The 'open door' policy, a user-friendly website, information evenings and regular newsletters contribute to the strong partnership with parents and every effort is made to connect with those families that are hard to engage. Parents have frequent opportunities to work alongside their children during the school day. The school has a caring ethos where all pupils are valued and included. Parents greatly appreciate this, as illustrated by their many positive comments, including, 'Every child is made to feel special,' and 'The school has a great family feel and looks after all children wonderfully.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle in quickly as they start school due to the warm relationships that adults establish with them. They soon adapt to the routines of school life and learn how to behave in different contexts, such as when listening to an adult, sharing resources or in assembly. Each adult is responsible for a small group and they gain good insights into children's progress through careful observation. Working closely together as a team, staff promote children's progress very well and give their welfare top priority. The integration of all age groups provides a seamless experience for children. This generally works well, but the choices children make within the wide range of options are not always recorded systematically to enable staff to follow them up with individuals or to provide additional challenging activities. About six children aged two to four attend either in the morning or afternoon. They have their own base where they are well cared

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for. They are integrated with the other children in the unit for play and learning activities.

Adults sustain children's attention skilfully as they introduce new activities and successfully encourage them to choose from a wide range of stimulating indoor and outdoor activities. Staff take care to model language so that children learn from their examples and they take every opportunity to engage them in conversation. When playing in the nativity scene and in Santa's grotto, children interacted with one another well. As well as promoting social development, such opportunities help children to acquire new vocabulary and learn to express themselves. Many activities involve counting. For example, children were making sure the numbered baubles on the Christmas tree were in the correct order.

There is a strong home/school partnership. Parents bring their children into the unit each day and this enables staff and parents to have a brief word. Staff are extremely good at calming down any children who may be reluctant to part from their parents or carers.

The success of the provision in meeting the needs of all children owes much to the effective management of the complex arrangements. The spacious and well-equipped areas provide ample opportunities for children to make good progress in all areas of learning, including their creative and physical development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents were positive in their views of the school. All but one parent felt their children enjoyed school. Many added highly positive comments about aspects of the school's work. A very small minority of parents raised individual concerns. These were followed up by the inspectors but they followed no particular pattern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brook Primary 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 136 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 346 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	76	31	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	96	71	40	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	49	68	50	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	54	58	43	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	77	57	59	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	73	54	63	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	57	54	40	4	3	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)	69	51	50	37	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	74	54	58	43	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	52	60	44	2	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	43	68	50	3	2	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	75	55	58	43	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	88	65	47	35	1	1	0	0

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.



16 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brook Primary School, Wordsley, DY8 5YN

Thank you for making us so welcome during our visit. You were very helpful and keen to let us know what makes Brook Primary special. You go to a good school where each one of you is cared for and taught well. You rise to the challenges given, and make good progress through the school. In order to help some of you do even better, we agree with teachers that they should keep an even closer eye on your work in writing to make sure you do as well as you possibly can. You obviously enjoy topic work and we have suggested that teachers build in some more written work to give you extra practice in writing for different purposes. It was good to see that those of you who can learn quickly are now tackling harder work, especially in English and mathematics. We would like teachers to provide more of this, as we could see that it is helping you reach higher standards.

We were impressed by the way adults and children get on together. Your behaviour is outstanding. You are polite and helpful and show a great deal of respect for one another and the adults that work with you. Your school is a happy place in which to learn and where you are growing up to be confident and responsible young people. We saw how teachers make lessons interesting and fun, and it was good to hear how much you enjoy and learn from visits and the visitors that come into school. Lessons in PSHE, PE and science help you gain a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily, keeping fit, and knowing how to stay safe. The large number of children taking part in after-school clubs shows how much you take exercise seriously. Congratulations on achieving the Healthy Schools Award and the Active Mark. Well done also to the school council for the way they offer suggestions, and to the eco-warriors for helping the school to gain the Eco-school award.

One of the main reasons your school has continued to improve since it was last inspected is because all the adults work well together with excellent leadership from the headteacher. They are committed to continuing to make your school even better. We are confident that with the positive attitudes you have to your work, you will try your hardest to help the school go from strength to strength.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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