

Brookside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106036
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	336603
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Frankin
Headteacher	Ms Maxine Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils as well as talking with the school's advisor. They observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' books and looked at a range of documentation relating to areas such as assessment, safeguarding and governance. They also took into account parents', staff and pupils' responses to the inspection questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of higher ability pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the effectiveness of the school's actions to raise standards in English, particularly writing
- the effectiveness of the school's promotion of community cohesion, and the impact of this on pupils' cultural awareness
- the capacity of the new leadership team to drive forward school improvement
- the arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of pupils.

Information about the school

Brookside is a smaller than average school, most of whose pupils live in favourable socio-economic circumstances. The proportion that is eligible to receive a free school meal is below average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few belong to minority ethnic groups and none speak English as an additional language. More than one third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion that has a statement of special need is also high. The school has eight resourced places providing for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. The headteacher took up her post in January 2009 and a new deputy headteacher joined the school September 2009. The school achieved the local authority's Inclusion Quality Mark in July 2009 and has gained the Healthy Schools award three times. It is the first school in the country to be awarded the Bike-it School Mark.

A private pre-school operates on the site. This was subject to a separate inspection and its report is available on the Ofsted website. The wrap-around care run by a separate provider was not inspected on this occasion.

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. It has many areas of significant strength, not least of which is its success in living up to its motto of 'Improvement through Inclusion'. A vibrant, special atmosphere is tangible on first entering the school and grows ever stronger during time spent there. Pupils explain their great enjoyment of school by saying that lessons are fun, staff are helpful and the school is 'resourceful because it provides something for everyone.' Their personal development is outstanding and their overall academic achievement is good.

Children get off to a good start and make good progress in the Reception class. In 2009, after some years of broadly average levels of attainment and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievement and standards have risen significantly in all tested subjects. This is in response to the school's determined efforts to provide suitable levels of challenge for all pupils, particularly those capable of higher attainment, with a specific focus on writing. The results have been dramatic. Above average proportions of pupils are working at the higher levels for their age in both key stages, not only at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but also in other year groups. Broadly average percentages are working at the expected levels, which is impressive given the high numbers of pupils who have special educational needs, some of which are profound. The achievement of such pupils is excellent.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards learning because relationships are very strong and the teaching is generally of at least good quality. Lessons are interesting and move at a good pace with activities that are well planned to suit pupils' individual needs. The inclusion of pupils with severe learning difficulties is remarkable in the way in which each participates in the lesson as much as possible. This is due to excellent planning, very skilled integration assistants and the supportive attitudes of all the pupils. Some marking is of high quality, but in some of the books it is only supportive and does not make sufficiently clear what pupils should do next to improve their work.

Outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils and their families mean that any barriers to learning are significantly reduced. The good quality curriculum is particularly effective in exciting pupils' interest and promoting their personal development. Their understanding of, for example, the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, is excellent and their sensitivity to others' needs is unusually mature. Pupils' knowledge of others' cultures is less strong because the school has yet to develop its teaching in this area and to extend its promotion of community cohesion beyond its immediate locality.

The new senior management team provides good quality leadership that is driving forward improvement whilst ensuring that all staff are included and supported. It is

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conducting a comprehensive self-review and has already put in place measures that are raising the levels of pupils' achievement. Excellent partnerships with parents and others strengthen the school's provision in a wide range of areas to the great benefit of pupils. Many parents became involved in working towards the recently achieved bicycling award and continue to cycle themselves as well as to ensure their children do the same so that they arrive at school alert and ready to learn. A strong sense of teamwork and mutual respect, combined with the evidence of improvements already made, ensures that the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures by extending its promotion of community cohesion to include a national and global perspective.
- Improve the quality of marking so that all pupils are clear about what they are aiming for in their work and how to get there.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils greatly enjoy learning in a wide range of areas because staff are enthusiastic and quick to celebrate each individual's achievement in the classroom, around school and during their free time. Typical of pupils' attitudes are comments about the school made by one in Year 6 who mentioned, with equal levels of appreciation, the extra outdoor facilities available for younger children and the fact that 'we get much more done in maths lessons now!' Having joined the school with broadly average skills, the majority of pupils are working at levels that are above those expected for their age and making good progress. For example, in one lesson, older pupils were exploring number patterns in a sophisticated manner, persisting well as they tried to work out how to understand the question asked, set about their investigation and record their findings. Pupils' work from the summer term, when the whole school used the establishment of the new Nature Meadow to inspire their writing, is of good quality. It ranges from younger pupils' instructional writing about tree planting and mini-beasts to older pupils' fantasy pop-up books about pixies and goblins. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress in both their academic and personal development. For example, one suggested 'a phew of smelly socks' when working on collective nouns. This is due to very careful diagnosis of their underlying difficulties and the excellent provision to support them.

The inclusion in the school of pupils who have a very wide range of needs greatly enhances the personal development of all. Pupils are unfailingly polite, tolerant of each other and appreciative of others' skills and efforts. Their behaviour is excellent, as is their attendance at school, establishing good habits for the future. Pupils' ideas contribute to the school's development, for example, improvements to the toilets and the introduction of a junior library. School councillors instigate their own charitable fund-raising activities and older pupils run the healthy tuck shop. A strong guardianship partnership with personnel at the nearby National Trust property extends pupils'

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ecological awareness beyond the school gate. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, although on occasion boys tend to dominate the playground with over-exuberant rushing around. Pupils have a strong moral sense, even in Year 1, for instance, admitting to whispered help from another when answering a question. They place a real value on aspects of life beyond the mundane. Pupils' awareness of other cultures, both in this country and further afield, is largely restricted to lessons about other religions and older pupils learning French.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons get off to a prompt start because pupils settle well and listen intently. Teachers generally use interactive whiteboards to very good effect, for example, to clarify the lesson objective, confirm pupils' understanding of the connection between letters and sounds or to record their thoughts. Careful planning and well-judged questions ensures that lessons usually cater well for pupils' different abilities, providing good challenge that inspires all pupils to work purposefully and with enjoyment. In outstanding lessons, the teaching uses 'on the spot' assessment exceptionally well to keep all pupils motivated

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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and on track to make excellent progress. In most classes, pupils are aware of their targets, some of which are extremely challenging, such as 'I need to be able to use any connective' for a pupil just starting Year 1. Occasionally, pupils do not fully understand what they are expected to do because this has not been sufficiently clearly explained. The norm is for absolute clarity about requirements in lessons, although this is not always the case when it comes to the guidance provided in the marking of pupils' work. The provision to promote the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. From their first arrival, detailed identification of individuals' learning and emotional difficulties, using external support and the knowledge gained from families as appropriate, leads to expert support in the classroom or, less frequently, in small groups. Staff talk about 'building the jigsaw' to unlock pupils' potential and consider making home visits as part of their job 'because it impacts on the children.' The teaching in the withdrawal groups is first rate and the support provided by the teaching assistants and integration assistants is of equal calibre. This means that the pupils have equal opportunity with others to shine, thoroughly enjoy school and achieve exceptionally well.

The curriculum for all pupils includes a broad range of activities. Information and communication technology is used well across many areas and recent adaptations to raise standards in writing have been highly effective, as well as raising the school's awareness to the potential of introducing more creative links between subjects. Pupils' greatly enjoy the enrichment provided by instrumental tuition, singing, extra-curricular clubs and the residential activities for older pupils in which every pupil, whatever their ability, is able to participate. Pupils feel safe in school because they are confident that staff know them as individuals, will listen to their concerns and take effective action. They explain that behaviour is so good 'because the teachers encourage us to think over what we have done.' The excellent care, guidance and support offered to pupils underpin the good quality of their learning.

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?

Good quality leadership and management are providing the school with a strong sense of direction, building on its already well-established strengths. The increasing involvement of all stakeholders in development planning ensures that everyone is clear about priorities and expectations, including taking responsibility for standards in their

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area. Alongside this increasing openness, staff are being given the time and support to carry out their roles, so that a strong team spirit is developing. Staff hold both the new senior leaders in high respect because they lead by example and are quick to offer support. They welcome the new assessment systems and introduction of termly monitoring of pupils' progress, with a clear understanding of the benefits to pupils' achievement. Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school, clear about the ethos that they wish it to maintain and prepared to provide practical help, positive support and also informed challenge whenever necessary. As yet, they have not ensured that the school makes a sufficiently strong contribution to community cohesion beyond the local area. Good procedures related to recruitment, training and day-to-day practice promote the safeguarding of pupils effectively. The school's procedures to ensure equality of opportunity are excellent. Lively, weekly newsletters keep parents very well informed and encourage them to act as partners in their children's education. Excellent partnerships with outside groups provide a wealth of opportunities ranging from resources that stretch higher attaining pupils in mathematics to musical activities at a range of professional venues. The school provides good value for money.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have immense fun in the Reception class and make good progress. The skills on entry of the great majority are broadly as expected for their age and by the time they join Year 1 many are working at above average levels in all areas of learning. The dispositions and attitudes of current Year 1 pupils were particularly strong by the end of

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Reception, providing them with a very strong foundation on which to build their future learning. High quality teaching is firmly based on careful observation and analysis of individual needs, but its real strength is the way in which it takes every opportunity to extend children's thinking and build on their interests. No chance is lost, for instance, to encourage children to practise their writing skills by adding a proud label to their model of a 'batmobile', or to be absolutely quiet so that they can identify which item in the room is making a low level buzzing noise. Staff build excellent relationships with the children and explain things very clearly so that they are captivated by the activities, behave well and work extremely hard. Close working with parents and the on-site pre-school ensure that children feel secure and settle swiftly into routines. The outside space is not ideal, in that apparatus cannot be set up prior to older pupils arriving at school. However, all areas of learning are suitably covered and, due to strong leadership, children achieve well during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They express delight in the way that it helps their children to make good progress and develop as well-rounded individuals who are well prepared for secondary school. 'We couldn't have hoped for more' and 'Brookside is a fantastic, supportive and proactive inclusive school,' are typical of their comments. A very small number raised concerns about staff's attitude towards, and the support provided for, pupils' individual needs but far greater numbers praised this. Inspectors agree with the many positive comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brookside 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 135 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	84	9	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	89	5	9	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	78	8	15	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	71	13	24	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	75	14	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	76	10	18	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	84	8	15	0	0	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)	38	69	11	20	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	73	12	22	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	78	9	16	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	69	13	24	1	2	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	45	82	7	13	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	82	8	15	2	4	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.



5 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookside Primary School, Stockport, SK6 8DB

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave my colleague and me when we inspected your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time at Brookside and were delighted to hear how much you do too! We were extremely impressed by how healthy you all are and that you are the first school in the country to achieve the Bike-It Mark. We were also pleased to see how supportive you all are of each other and how well you behave.

We agree with you that yours is a good school. It helps you to make good progress in your work and enables many of you to reach above average standards. This is because teachers plan interesting lessons for you and mostly explain very clearly what you need to do, so that you enjoy your learning and want to work hard. Staff also offer you high levels of care so that you feel safe in school and confident to share any concerns with them. Those of you who need lots of additional help do exceedingly well, because of the outstanding support you receive. Younger children have great fun and get off to a good start in the Reception class.

Your senior leaders have already started improving what happens in school, and I know that you have helped them to decide which things should happen first. We have suggested two more things they should do to make your learning even better.

- Help you to understand more about people, in this country and abroad, who have different cultures from your own.
- Make sure that your teachers provide you with hints about how to improve, as well as supportive comments, when they mark your work.

I do hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Drake

Lead Inspector

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