

Brassington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112515
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337953
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jacqui Lansley
Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Bolton
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector who observed learning in each of the three classes, visited six lessons and observed the work of three teachers. The inspector also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. She observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including tracking of pupils' progress and school planning. The inspector also evaluated samples of pupils' recent work and documents regarding safeguarding. Questionnaires from 30 parents and carers, 24 pupils and eight staff were scrutinised.

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

- whether all pupils including the more-able achieve as well as they can and if boys in Key Stage 1 do well enough in reading and if girls in Key Stage 2 make sufficient progress in mathematics
- if the personal development and well-being of the pupils is well supported by effective care, guidance and support
- whether assessment information is used well enough to provide consistently challenging and interesting work for all groups of pupils
- if the work of the school is monitored and evaluated rigorously enough to identify the right areas for further improvement.

Information about the school

In this very small rural school all pupils are of White British heritage. There are several more boys, with no girls in one year group and a low number in some others. There are relatively fewer pupils entitled to free school meals than is usual nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to the national average. These pupils' needs are related to learning difficulties. All classes are mixed ages. Most of the teaching staff are new to the school since the previous inspection. One member of staff is full-time and all the others, including the headteacher, have part-time roles. The school holds Healthy Schools, Artsmark, Eco Schools, Creative Partnerships and Activemark awards.

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. The outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are outstanding because the school enables pupils to grow in confidence and develop the skills that help them prepare for their future. The personal development and well-being of the pupils is outstanding because they are very well cared for, guided and supported. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is outstanding. Pupils unanimously say they like school and enjoy the range of extra activities. Parents think their children are happy and one notes 'there is a well balanced emphasis on creativity and enjoyment' while another indicates 'teachers in the school go out of their way to help'.

There are very small numbers in some year groups. It is therefore difficult to identify trends in attainment. Children enter the Reception class with mixed early skills which sometimes are in line with the expectations for their age and other groups, such as the current intake, have skills that are above those often seen. Nevertheless, from their different starting points pupils across the school make good overall progress and achieve well. At the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is above average in English and they often do particularly well in writing. However, there are some very quiet pupils who lack self-confidence. Standards are not as high in mathematics because not enough pupils have well developed mental mathematics skills and some lack the confidence to solve problems without support.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding which has a positive impact on their learning. Those of different ages get on very well together. Pupils are clear about what they have to do to keep themselves and their friends safe and understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum is good overall and is most effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 where it is outstanding. While staff across the school use assessment information to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities sometimes, and especially in mathematics, work is not always challenging enough. The school is very successful in enriching the learning of pupils through a creative curriculum.

Good leadership and management has resulted in improvement since the last inspection and provides the school with a secure basis for future development. Nevertheless there are challenges presented by the building and outside areas that the staff and governors are monitoring carefully. This includes the lack of an adjoining play area for the youngest children to enjoy free-flow activities and limited storage and space to conduct practical activities safely.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - improving the pupils' mental mathematics skills
 - extending the opportunities for pupils to use and apply what they know in a range of practical and problem-solving activities
 - ensuring that staff plan and provide a range of activities that challenge pupils of different abilities.
- Consider ways to improve the school accommodation by:
 - extending the facilities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that there is scope to develop free-flow activities
 - ensuring that leaders act on the findings of the premises audit.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The outcomes for pupils are outstanding because achievement is good in all key areas and pupils develop the skills that equip them very well for later life. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are above the goals for their age. Many are confident children who want to do what their older siblings and friends do, while some are very quiet. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make outstanding progress in all areas of their development and most especially in their writing, which is of high quality. Standards in reading are above average. During the inspection and as shown in a sample of recent work pupils make rapid progress in learning how to write imaginative stories such as 'Once upon a time there were three little knights' and how to produce a book of spells as part of their current work on castles and knights. They also make lots of progress when weighing tins of 'spiders legs', 'lizards tongues' and 'bats wings'. In Key Stage 2 the rate of progress dips a little but is usually good. Standards at the age of eleven vary from year to year. The current cohort is set to do well with several pupils on course to achieve the higher levels. Pupils with additional needs make good progress in relation to their targets. Data and observations indicate that in some years girls do not do as well as the boys. Observations indicate that this appears to be largely related to the varying abilities within each cohort.

The school is fully committed to helping pupils develop a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy high quality healthy school meals and the school encourages others to consider the benefits of healthy packed lunch choices. Pupils recognise how to stay safe in active playtimes and when using the good range of outdoor play equipment. They behave very well in lessons and around the school although a few could make more effort to join in discussions and explain what they find out. Pupils are very proud of their school and willingly take on roles on the school council or as part of the Eco committee and do much to encourage recycling and composting. Attendance is above average and parents support the school's drive to discourage holidays in term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral,

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social and cultural development is strongly promoted through the school's very well-considered links with a range of organisations and activities that extend their understanding of the world and issues beyond their locality.

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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and the curriculum while good overall are exemplary in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Here staff work very well together and share very high expectations of what the children can do. Key to this success is the highly imaginative range of activities provided. Staff produce their own formats for activities including writing and mathematics, so that recording what they have found out captures the pupils' imagination and results in some very high quality work. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good in English but not as effective in mathematics. This is because activities are sometimes based too much on commercial workbooks or unimaginative materials that do not always meet pupils' different needs well enough. While staff have a suitable range of assessment information available they do not use this as well as they could to provide challenging activities for all groups. Staff often explain things well to the pupils

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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but at times explanations such as how to compare decimals and fractions are not clear enough. There is a strong creative curriculum with a lot of emphasis on music and the arts including from other cultures. But the mathematics curriculum does not provide enough open-ended problem-solving activities.

Teaching and non-teaching staff care for the pupils very well as demonstrated at lunchtime when staff encourage pupils to try vegetables and foods that are new to them. Extra support is provided for those with additional needs which ensures they make good progress towards their individual targets. The marking of pupils work is exemplary in Key Stage 1 so that pupils clearly know what they need to do to improve.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff team work well together and the headteacher is helping to build staff confidence and drive improvement. School self-evaluation is very accurate and matches almost all strengths and areas for improvement noted in the inspection. This provides a very secure base for school improvement planning. The monitoring of planning, teaching and learning is good although not yet fully embedded and therefore planning is not consistently effective in all activities. With the headteachers' encouragement, subject leaders are starting to develop their role further including in peer coaching and in monitoring and evaluating provision in areas for which they hold responsibility. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and is aware of the need to monitor the performance of different groups including girls even more carefully. Governors are well led and very supportive of the school. They are developing their role as a critical friend well and recognise the need to extend their programme of focussed visits so that all governors are well informed at first hand of continuing developments.

The school has excellent links with a very wide range of external agencies including on a local, wider and international scale. This, together with a careful audit of provision, supports community cohesion very well. For a small rural community the school and its pupils are outward looking and culturally aware. There are good links with parents and the school works hard to support their different needs. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and there are careful checks on the suitability of those who work in school, with any minor omissions in the recording of such information acted upon quickly. The staff are very aware of the limitations of the old building, the state of repair of some areas and the continuing need to act upon the findings of a premises audit. The school

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provides good value for money and manages its very tight budget carefully. The staff are however, wisely considering internal and external re-modelling of the accommodation to achieve the best possible facilities for all, including the youngest children.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent: it is a strength of the school and the outstanding effectiveness has been maintained since the previous inspection. This enables the younger children to get off to a flying start and make rapid gains in their learning. This is because very skilled and experienced staff have high expectations of the children and provide a highly effective curriculum based around themes that really capture everyone's imagination. Children are admitted at one of two points during the year of their fifth birthday and enter the Reception group within the mixed age class with widely varied early experiences. Most children are keen to do what their older siblings and friends do. Their speaking, listening and early counting skills are often good, although their knowledge of letters and sounds is initially more limited. They join in activities enthusiastically as seen in their sheer enjoyment of playing 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' in early morning wake-up activities and when they fish for light and heavy items by searching 'the dark, murky water' which they think may be from the castle moat. Children make excellent progress in all areas of their learning and development and enter Year 1 having often exceeded the targets for their age. Leadership and management of the provision are excellent and the team leader is highly effective in ensuring the provision goes from strength to strength.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A good proportion of parents and carers replied to the inspection questionnaire and these responses reveal that the large majority are very pleased with what is provided for their families. They believe children are happy and feel safe and that the school does much to promote healthy lifestyles. Parents indicate that they are particularly appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular activities including educational visits and how music and singing has improved under the current headteacher. They also like that staff are accessible and that, as one notes, 'It has a welcoming atmosphere for the whole family and local community.' Relatively few concerns were noted and these were mainly of an individual nature related to behaviour and that some parents would like more information about progress. The inspection judged that behaviour is excellent and the range of information available is wide-ranging and with an 'open-door' policy should parents require additional information.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brassington 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 inspector received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 46 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	80	6	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	80	6	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	57	12	40	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	53	11	37	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	63	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	57	11	37	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	77	7	23	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)	15	50	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	57	12	40	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	53	11	37	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	60	10	33	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	77	4	13	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	77	7	23	0	0	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.



26 March 2010

Dear pupils

Inspection of Brassington Primary School, Matlock, DE4 4HB

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed chatting to several of you, including those of you on the school council and Eco committee who were good at explaining what you all do. I also liked meeting several of you in lessons, at break and when I attended assemblies. I particularly enjoyed chatting to some of you at lunchtime and finding out that there's not much you would change about your school. Thank you also for the questionnaire returns some of you filled in for the inspection. These are some of the findings from the visit.

I think your school provides you with a good quality education, that you make good progress and achieve well. I think the curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is excellent and this means you younger ones learn a huge amount and really enjoy your time in school. Hurrah! I also noticed that all staff care for you very well and this means you feel safe and like school. I was pleased to see how well your school works with other groups and what a lot you learn about life and events in different countries and how this helps your school to feel part of the wider world.

To improve your school further, I have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- help you to develop the skills and confidence to solve mathematical problems more speedily
- check even more carefully how the school accommodation might be improved, especially for the youngest children.

You can also help your school by making sure that all of you and particularly the girls offer your ideas more in discussions and some of you think even more carefully about what you eat in packed lunches.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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