

Brackensdale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112736
Local Authority	Derby
Inspection number	338002
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Parker
Headteacher	Mr David Hall
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 June 2007
School address	Walthamstow Drive Mackworth Estate Derby DE22 4BS
Telephone number	01332 341171
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, the school's senior leadership and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at key documentation regarding safeguarding and school improvement and analysed 79 parent questionnaires.

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

- how well the school meets the very wide range of pupils' specific needs
- the effectiveness in the way the school is tackling underachievement and raising standards
- how well the school encourages pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Information about the school

The school is average in size. The school population is mainly White British. Thirty per cent of pupils are on free school meals. The numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low. Currently 43 per cent of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and 20 per cent have statements detailing their specific need. The school is designated an enhanced resource provision for pupils with communication difficulties on the autistic spectrum and has places for 8 pupils per year group and 20 places in the specialist attached unit for children with severe autism. The school was awarded healthy school status in 2008. The school operates an informal drop in breakfast club.

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, which has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils supported by the specialist provision make good progress. The attainment of other pupils has undergone a step change so that the percentage of these pupils gaining the expected levels is broadly average and they are making good year-on-year progress. Almost all parents agree or agree strongly that they are happy with their child's experience at the school. Comments testify to the supportive and caring nature of the school, the 'friendliness and approachability' of staff, their 'hard work' and the impact of all this on their child's progress; 'her school work has improved a great deal and her confidence gives her such happiness.' The school is highly inclusive, committed to supporting the wide range of individual needs, and, in the words of one parent, 'truly practise the ethos that every child matters.'

Pupils say they enjoy school and the 'challenge that they are given'; they enjoy 'doing things' and teachers are 'nice and helpful'. Pupils are adamant that they feel safe, including in breakfast club, because they are clear what they should do if they were unhappy, know that teachers will listen to them and take effective action to sort out any problems. Safeguarding arrangements are particularly robust. Pupils have a good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and they make a good contribution to the school community through their various roles and responsibilities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall although cultural development is not as strong as the other elements. The school has developed a plan to promote community cohesion but is at an early stage in its implementation. That said pupils' responses endorse the view that the school is a harmonious, caring community at ease with itself. Pupils are genuinely proud of their school and value the opportunities to learn and develop as young people.

The school's improvement is the result of the school's leadership. The headteacher leads the school well. There is an effective partnership with the associate headteacher and the senior leadership team is well informed and genuinely committed to raising standards by improving further the quality of teaching and extending the creative nature of the curriculum. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good but there are inconsistencies across classes. Teachers do not always foster the independence of learners. In some lessons, there was too little opportunity for pupils to take responsibility; basic skills were taught rather than practised so that pupils were passive. Self-evaluation is accurate; the school knows itself well and the improvement plan is sharply and effectively focused on raising standards. Given the school's record of improvement, the shared ethos and clarity of

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focus to maintain this momentum of improvement, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by consistently
 - fostering pupils' skills as independent learners
 - providing opportunities for pupils to practise and use their language skills across the curriculum
 - using active creative approaches to develop pupils' knowledge skills and understanding.

- Continue to enrich and broaden pupils' creative and cultural experiences and, specifically,
 - through the plans to develop community cohesion, raise pupils' awareness further of the richness and diversity of modern society and how children live in other parts of the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The progress of pupils within the specialist provision (The Phoenix suite) is monitored systematically. Progress is not linear and can slow or accelerate but there is a very high level of care tailored specifically to pupil's individual needs. Skilled teaching and high quality educational support enables pupils to make good progress so that many pupils join mainstream classes for some lessons. Critically, this progress includes their social and emotional progress as well as motor, life and personal skills and pupils' academic development. One parent wrote at length about the impact of the work of the unit, listing how they celebrate and encourage her child's passions, help his language skills and help him control his frustrations... 'the list is endless and on top of all that he is being taught to read, write and be numerate.' Pupils who are part of the specialist provision but who are taught in mainstream classes also make good progress and, when appropriate, are challenged and supported to reach high standards. This is because there is strong support by effective teaching assistants, based on detailed education plans. Progress of pupils who have specific learning difficulties other than those supported by the specialist provision generally make good but variable progress often from some low starting points in Year 3. For example, progress of pupils needing 'school action' tends to accelerate in the upper part of the school. In one lesson, lower attaining pupils, many with statements, made good progress because activities were carefully planned and structured. This ensured that they were fully engaged and motivated to do well and confident to contribute their ideas.

Attainment of pupils not supported by the specialist resource rose significantly in 2009 so that the percentage reaching the expected level was broadly average. This is

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reflected in standards in the current Year 6 and down the school where similar proportions are on track to reach the expected standards. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well. In a mathematics lesson, these pupils were engaged, motivated, listened very well and worked quickly. The ethos of the lesson was such that pupils could admit without loss of face that they were stuck. Pupils were expected to talk about and explain their approach and there was consistent encouragement to work the mathematics out mentally as they tackled the progressively more demanding challenges. Girls and boys were equally engaged in the lesson. Three particularly able boys in the lesson worked with a specific enrichment activity. They showed tenacity and cooperation as they struggled to understand how a method of multiplication works by drawing lines and then to provide an explanation.

The school fosters pupils' self-confidence well and its ethos encourages them to take responsibility for their actions. There are good opportunities to develop social skills. Cultural development is satisfactory; many pupils have a relatively narrow view of the world and limited experience of the arts and literature and so find creating ideas in their writing difficult. Good behaviour is reinforced by consistent positive approaches by staff. Respect for other people is encouraged and modelled well. Preparation for economic well-being is satisfactory as is attendance.

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	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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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

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Teaching is often skilled, motivating and enthusiastic. It is not always consistent in achieving the balance between directed teaching and fostering the learning opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their skills within a creative context. As a result, pupils sometimes have limited opportunity to use their language skills, particularly speaking. Teachers manage their classrooms well and teaching assistants provide skilled and generally well-targeted support. Planning clearly identifies the range of needs in the classroom. Effective use is made of the interactive whiteboards to hook pupils' interest throughout the lesson. Good assessment is an integral part of most lessons with teachers carefully checking on progress at significant points. Pupils have a clear understanding of where they are and what they need to do in order to improve.

The curriculum is good in that it provides a two-year cycle of carefully planned imaginative themes to link subjects together, with good provision for aspects of personal development. The grouping of pupils by their learning needs rather than age has allowed for more sharply focused support and this has been fundamental in the school's ability to raise standards, tackle underachievement and ensure pupils make good progress. The groupings are adjusted for mathematics. During the inspection, younger classes were engaged in an extensive creative experience of a World War 2 street party led by visitors in role and costume. It was a particularly pertinent example of an approach that has yet to be embedded fully across the school.

The quality of overall care and commitment by staff is excellent and the arrangements for support and guidance are leading to pupils' good development.

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?

There is both strong teamwork amongst staff and a shared, strong accountability for the progress that pupils' make. Targets are challenging. There is regular review of pupils' progress linked to performance management and making very effective use of assessment data. In addition, the school uses a range of effective strategies, including intensive one-to-one support to help individual pupils catch up. Across the school and within the specialist provision, the good work in classrooms is underpinned by a sense of rigour both in the supportive managements systems and

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the quality of reflection by staff on what will work best for a particular child. Governance is good. Governors are influential in determining the school's strategic direction and consult with parents. Whilst supportive of the school, governors are prepared to question and challenge.

The school staff are highly committed to inclusion. The sharper targeting of resources is helping pupils make good progress and has raised standards. One parent wrote that the school has helped her child 'become part of society in a way we could not do on our own at home.'

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most comments were positive about the school and its work. A small number of parents raised individual concerns such as the difficulty a working parent had in attending parents' meetings but there was no clear pattern. Two parents had concerns about bullying. Informal and formal conversations with pupils confirmed that they felt that the school was friendly and pupils mostly got on with each other. If they were upset by anything, pupils knew to approach a member of staff and were confident that they would help them. Almost all pupils in the pupil questionnaire reported that they felt safe and enjoyed school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

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

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

The inspection team received 79 completed or part completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	57	32	41	2	3		
The school keeps my child safe	40	51	39	49	0	0		
The school informs me about my child’s progress	38	48	39	49	1	1		
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	48	37	47	1	1		
The teaching is good at this school	47	59	30	38	1	1		
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	35	44	41	52	2	3		
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	47	41	52	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)	34	43	43	54	0	0		
The school meets my child’s particular needs	39	49	37	47	1	1		
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	43	40	51	3	4		
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	35	46	58	3	4		
The school is led and managed effectively	40	51	37	47	0	0		
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	49	62	28	35	2	3		

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 all 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

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 pupils' 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.

28 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brackensdale Junior School, Derby DE22
4BS



Thank you for making Mr Williams and me so welcome in your school. I am particularly grateful to those pupils who gave up their time to talk to us. I also enjoyed the assembly very much, although I must admit I got a bit lost when the song turned into a round!

This is a good school. Teachers are helping you all make good progress. This is because the school thinks about the support it provides for you very carefully. The school has improved a great deal since it was last inspected. Standards have risen and the number of pupils reaching the expected level is now broadly average. You behave well in lessons and around the school, enjoy learning and I was particularly pleased that you feel safe. The school is a friendly place but you also told me that you are very clear what you should do if you feel unhappy or upset and that you had every confidence that staff would do something about it. You have a good understanding of what goes to make a healthy lifestyle. I agree with those pupils who said that teachers are kind and support you and that lessons are interesting. Teachers are skilled and link subjects together successfully. In some lessons, you are not very active learners and teachers could help you take more responsibility for your learning by making sure that there are good opportunities for you to practise and use your skills.

The headteacher and the associate headteacher lead the school well. All staff clearly care about you a very great deal and carefully monitor your progress. I asked the school to find ways for you to gain a wider view of how other children live in this country and other parts of the world. This school is continuing to improve. Staff want you to achieve the best you can. You can help in this process by continuing to work hard.

All good wishes to you in your future school careers.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant
Lead inspector

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