

# Brackensdale Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112737
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	338003
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hil

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jennifer Dean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Diane Reddish
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Walthamstow Drive Mackworth Estate Derby
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<b>Email address</b>	head@brackensdalei.derby.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Forty-two per cent of the inspection was spent observing learning. Nineteen lessons were observed and ten teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, particularly that related to safeguarding or pupils' progress. Questionnaires were analysed from a number of pupils and staff, as well as 29 from parents and carers.

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

- how much progress pupils make and how this is related to the quality of teaching, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how well the school promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills
- to what extent the strengths in care, guidance and support have been sustained since the last inspection, and the impact on pupils' personal development.

## Information about the school

This average sized infant school is an enhanced resource school for the local authority. It includes a specialist class, 'class seven', that provides for pupils who have substantial special needs on the autistic spectrum. As well as pupils from the immediate area, it caters for a large number of pupils from further afield who have substantial special needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the proportion of pupils with such needs is well above average, and the proportion with statements of special educational needs is exceptionally high. A well-above average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin, but an increasing proportion come from a range of minority ethnic groups. However, almost all pupils speak English as their mother tongue.

**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

The school provides a good quality of education, so pupils make good progress from very low starting points. The extremely large numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well in the light of their difficulties, because of the support they get, which is carefully tailored to their needs. Pupils who do not have special needs also achieve well and their attainment is above that of such pupils nationally. However, the overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 remains low, because of the very low attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Of the 51 pupils who undertook National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2009, for example, 11 had statements of special educational need. Standards rose significantly in 2009, particularly in writing, following a focus on this by the school, particularly in matching work to individuals' needs. Writing results rapidly improved to be broadly average. Results rose in reading and mathematics too, but not to the same extent, because they were not given such focused attention last year. These results remained significantly below average. .

The strong pastoral provision noted at the last inspection continues and leads to pupils' good personal development. Behaviour in class is good and supports the good progress observed in almost all lessons during the inspection. Pupils also behave well around the school and get on well with each other and with the adults. They enjoy school, have positive attitudes towards learning and work hard, although many find extended concentration difficult. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the social and moral aspects particularly strong. The school is successful in ensuring the full social and educational inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities into its daily life. Pupils' cultural development is the weakest aspect, as their understanding of the wide range of cultures across the world is limited.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved in the last two years, particularly through improvements to the accommodation and curriculum in the Nursery. Pupils are now entering Year 1 with higher attainment than in previous years, though the latest results at the end of Reception were still below national averages in almost all aspects of pupils' development. Good use is made of the outside learning environment, but the school has correctly identified a number of shortcomings in this provision, particularly the lack of shelter for use during bad weather.

Provision in class seven is carefully tailored to the complex needs of the pupils by staff who have considerable expertise and knowledge. As a result, these pupils make good progress. However, the outside area, which the class currently shares with the Nursery class, is not specifically adapted to their particular needs, and the school is considering how this may be improved.

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A key to the good progress across the school is good teaching. Improved systems to track pupils' achievements in the last few years have enabled teachers to match work more closely to pupils' different needs. A greater focus on promoting speaking and listening skills has been effective in raising standards across a range of subjects, but particularly in writing. Extremely good use of the large number of skilled support staff also helps pupils to learn. This is particularly effective in ensuring that pupils with special needs and/or disabilities take a full part in lessons and make good progress. The curriculum makes good links between subjects, which makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable for pupils.

Good self-evaluation is based on the careful tracking of pupils' progress and rigorous evaluation of what is provided. As a result, most elements of leadership and management are good and ensure good teamwork and a consistent approach across the school. This means the school has a good capacity to improve further, and is illustrated by the significant improvements that have been made over the last few years in pupils' attainment, the curriculum and attendance. The school makes good use of a variety of partners to enhance pupils' well-being, and this is a particular strength in supporting the pupils in class seven. The school is a cohesive and harmonious community and has good links to promote cohesion locally. However, the promotion of community cohesion in respect to the variety of different communities in this county and abroad is at an early stage of development.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment in mathematics and reading to match that in writing by giving these subjects the same concentrated focus as writing was given last year, and making similarly sharp use of assessment information to match work to individual needs.
- Improve the outdoor provision for children in the early years and in the specialist class, particularly by
  - ensuring the facilities can be used in poor weather
  - matching the provision for the specialist class to pupils' particular needs.
- Improve the school's contribution to community cohesion and pupils' understanding of cultural issues by
  - more systematically teaching pupils about a wider range of different cultures
  - providing more direct opportunities for pupils to learn about the wide range of communities in the United Kingdom and further afield.

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

Achievement is good. Although pupils' attainment is low, it is improving rapidly and represents good progress in the light of the very high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities in each cohort. Pupils enjoy learning and are happy in school. They feel safe and looked after because they have confidence in the adults to care for them.

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They behave safely in the playground and, right from their start in school, learn about how to stay safe in different activities, such as gymnastics lessons. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet, and throw themselves enthusiastically into the many physical activities available, both in lessons and at play. Their great enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which has improved in successive years to be in line with the national average. Pupils contribute well to the community and willingly take on responsibilities around the school. For example, the 'mini-leaders' take a pride in leading other children in playground games.

Pupils' good progress, positive attitudes and relationships, and their rapidly developing independence prepare them well for their future lives in education and beyond.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is at least good in the very large majority of lessons, with a few lessons outstanding and a few satisfactory. The teaching in small group or individual sessions, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is often excellent. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, know their needs or difficulties well, and manage

<sup>1</sup> 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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classes effectively. Expectations are high and are based on the greatly improved tracking of pupils' progress. Adults keep a careful eye on how pupils are getting on in lessons, and quickly intervene if anyone is confused. Some very good use is made of structured opportunities for speaking and listening, for example through role-play or through giving pupils the chance to talk through their ideas in pairs. This has been a big factor in the improved standards in writing over the last year. Occasionally, in satisfactory lessons, such opportunities are missed, or pupils spend too long passively listening to the teacher. In these cases, the pace of learning can drop as pupils' concentration wanes. The outstanding lessons often feature activities that pupils can be actively involved in and that present a high level of manageable challenge to everyone. This was observed, for example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2 when the excellent use of support staff enabled all pupils to be fully involved throughout, resulting in outstanding enjoyment and very good progress.

Pupils' enjoyment is enhanced by a good curriculum based on a variety of topics that greatly interest and enthuse them. During the inspection, they particularly enjoyed the work on traditional stories. For example, the Goldilocks story generated considerable interest in bears that supported learning across a variety of subjects. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well. The school won an Active Mark last year for providing a high level of physical activity to each pupil.

The pastoral care provided to pupils ensures that they are safe and happy in school. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' emotional and social needs and work well to meet them. The support given to pupils in class seven is particularly notable, meeting their complex needs very well. The great expertise of adults in the specialist class, in dealing with special educational needs, particularly autism, has been shared with colleagues in the main school. As a result, the help given to such pupils throughout the school is of good quality. The learning mentor, in particular, provides an effective link with parents.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership from the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers supports an effective team of staff who work together well to improve provision. Staff share expertise well, with subject leaders playing a significant part in monitoring progress and provision, and helping raise standards. The effectiveness and consistency of teaching

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has been raised because the improved tracking systems had made teachers fully accountable for their classes' progress, whilst giving them the tools to improve their teaching. Tracking is used well to identify any pupils in danger of falling behind, and to put in place good intervention programmes to help them catch up. A programme of monitoring lessons helps staff to share their specialist expertise with colleagues, and to improve practice.

Governors give good support, have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are well able to hold the school to account for its performance.

Safeguarding procedures meet all requirements, and secure systems are in place to ensure the well-being of vulnerable pupils. All pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability are fully included in school life and make good progress. The school's expertise in catering for pupils on the autistic spectrum is a notable strength. Good informal links are made with parents and carers, who greatly appreciate what the school does for their children, although the school struggles to involve all its parents in more formal consultations, such as questionnaires.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Whilst good links are made locally, those with communities in the wider world are under-developed, as the school itself has identified. Resources, particularly personnel, are deployed well. Given the very low starting points of pupils, their good personal development and their improving progress, the school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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Children make good progress from extremely low starting points in both Nursery and Reception because of good teaching and an improved curriculum. The shift to giving children more genuine choice in their activities results in high levels of engagement and enthusiasm, and increased independence. Standards are rising from a few years ago, when virtually all the children left Reception with standards significantly below those expected. In subsequent years, although varying with the makeup of different cohorts, attainment has risen, although remaining below average overall. A good balance is drawn between teacher-directed activities and those children choose for themselves.

Ongoing life in the classroom is monitored consistently by the adults, and observations feed into a record of progress that is used well in planning future work. Adults intervene skilfully and sensitively in play activities to develop children's understanding and, in particular, their speaking and listening skills. Good use is made of the outdoor areas when weather permits. Good emphasis is given to developing children's phonic skills, both in direct teaching and through incidental activities that occur. Children feel safe and happy in school, and have good relationships with the adults and each other. The key stage is led and managed well, and this has resulted in improved achievement and a better curriculum.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Only a few parents and carers returned questionnaires to the inspection team. The vast majority of responses received were positive about the school. The parents were particularly positive about the quality of teaching and their children's progress, and how their children enjoy school and are kept safe. A few expressed doubts about how poor behaviour was dealt with. The inspectors found that pupils who struggle to conform are dealt with firmly and sensitively and that staff ensure that interruptions to the learning of other are very rare.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brackensdale Infant 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	59	12	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	52	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	38	16	55	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	34	17	59	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	48	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	45	14	48	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	38	17	59	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)	7	24	16	55	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	45	15	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	41	11	38	3	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	41	12	41	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	38	15	52	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	52	13	45	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



25 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brackensdale Infant School, Derby, DE22 4BS

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed chatting to you and watching you working hard in class. This is what we found out.

Brackensdale is a good school where you are all making good progress. This is because the teachers and other adults are good at helping you to learn, and they give you lots of interesting things to do. You do particularly well in writing. You learn a lot about different things. We were impressed by your good behaviour and by how sensible you are in class and in the playground. You all seem to get on very well together and with the adults, and to enjoy learning. The adults are good at keeping an eye on how you are getting on, and they make sure that, if anyone needs extra help, then they get it. The adults are also good at organising the school and make sure that you are looked after well. They are keen to keep on making the school better, and we have agreed on three things that they are going to concentrate on to do this.

They are going to help you to get to the same standards in reading and maths as you do in writing.

They are going to improve outdoor learning for the younger children and for class seven.

They are going to help you learn more about people in other parts of this country and around the world.

You can help by keeping up your good behaviour and trying your best with your reading and maths work. We hope you carry on enjoying school.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead inspector

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