

Brookland Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118664
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339271
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vivienne Cubbon
Headteacher	Sue Hill
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons and four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, governors, other staff with leadership responsibilities and the school improvement partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including the school improvement plan, monitoring records, the school's self-evaluation document, pupils' progress records and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 67 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- the attainment and progress of more able pupils in mathematics
- how successfully the curriculum has been developed and its impact on pupils' learning and enjoyment
- how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to achieve as well as they can
- how well pupils take responsibility and understand how to improve their work.

Information about the school

Brookland is a smaller-than-average village school. Few pupils live in or near the village and many travel some distance to school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that found nationally. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning, speech, language and communication or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school has gained the Healthy School 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Brookland pupils are great ambassadors for their outstanding school of which they, staff, governors and parents and carers are justifiably very proud. At the heart of the school's success is the commitment by all staff to meeting the personal and academic needs and aspirations of every single child. Pupils are well-rounded individuals who are happy, confident and excited by all their experiences at school. One parent wrote, 'I find all staff members very supportive and willing to help individuals achieve their goals.' Pupils' excellent personal skills are underpinned and promoted by outstanding care, guidance and support from all the staff. Outstanding teaching and a rich vibrant curriculum inspire and motivate pupils to become independent and resourceful learners. By the time pupils leave the school, attainment is above average and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Social and moral aspects are outstanding but cultural development is a relative weakness because although pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through the curriculum, they have limited direct experience of them. The school's work on national and global aspects of community cohesion are less well developed than the strengths of its work in the school and local community. Attendance is average as, although most pupils attend regularly, children from a small number of families are absent from school too frequently which means they miss out on important learning.

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors work closely together and very effectively, to accurately evaluate the strengths and areas for development in the school and drive forward improvement. The relentless drive and commitment of the highly effective headteacher ensures that all pupils have the very best learning experiences. The school has successfully improved from good to outstanding since the last inspection and this demonstrates that there is an outstanding capacity to improve further. Inspectors agree with a parent who summed up the views of many with the comment, 'As a small school it has a real family feel, yet it has made real steps and is always striving to offer pupils opportunities that larger schools have.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by building on the work with parents and carers and other agencies to ensure the more regular attendance of a small number of pupils.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to experience direct contact with those from other communities and faiths and develop the school's work on the global and national aspects of community cohesion.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' enjoyment of school is infectious. They are very happy and settled and relate exceptionally well to adults and to each other. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure and say they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. They are very well informed and aware of e-safety, which is championed very effectively by a group of Year 6 pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need for regular exercise and a healthy balanced diet to keep fit and well, which is recognised by the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. They are particularly enthusiastic about the daily 'wake up and shake up' session. Pupils enjoy responsibilities and take them seriously. Older pupils are excellent role models for the younger ones. They enjoy being enterprising; for example, teams of older pupils worked with great enthusiasm on 'Dragon's Den' fundraising projects. A talented choir participates in many local events. Singing contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual development.

Pupils' excellent personal attributes, including their exemplary behaviour, make a very positive contribution to their outstanding achievement in English, mathematics and science. By the time they leave in Year 6, attainment is above average and they make outstanding progress in their learning from their starting points. The school's records of progress and the work seen show that the proportion of pupils who are on track to reach the higher Level 5 of the statutory assessment tests in all subjects is above that found nationally.

Inspectors looked at mathematics, especially for the most able pupils. They found that pupils of all abilities are motivated and inspired in their learning, as seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils solved problems through investigative work, leading to the discovery of 'loot' in treasure boxes. Their excellent skills of collaboration, and the ability to understand why they needed to use their mathematical knowledge, helped them learn in a fun and challenging way about coordinates, mathematical operations and code cracking. Similar skills of collaboration and negotiation made a very positive contribution to their learning when writing play scripts. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others because their needs are identified at an early stage and they are supported very well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are very carefully planned and teachers work very hard to make learning interesting and exciting for pupils. The headteacher and staff have been resolute in their work to provide an excellent themed and creative curriculum that best meets the needs of all the pupils. Learning is enhanced by many enrichment opportunities, including good use of the school grounds, visitors to school and trips. These activities broaden pupils' interests and experiences very effectively. Pupils and parents and carers appreciate the wide range of clubs, including breakfast and after-school clubs. One parent wrote, 'The wide range of extra school activities stimulate the children into learning; they expand their knowledge in an enjoyable way.'

Teaching is skilful, motivating and enthusiastic. All staff have excellent relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils learn exceptionally well because they feel valued and confident to try things out and express their own ideas. Teachers are very skilled at asking questions that make pupils think. This inspires and motivates pupils to develop curious and inquiring minds. They are very effectively taught to apply their learning skills in all that they do. Very effective marking and feedback give pupils clear guidance for improving their work and opportunities for evaluating their own progress in their learning.

Parents and carers and pupils agree that the school looks after them exceptionally well. One parent said, 'The school has always been very caring and approachable. Pupils respect and like all the teachers, who really know the children, which enables them to bring out the best in the child.' The needs of vulnerable pupils are very well met and greatly enhanced by the excellent links with other agencies to provide well-targeted

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support. Well thought out and executed arrangements ensure pupils have a smooth transition from class to class. The school works extremely hard with pupils and their families to promote regular attendance but a few do not attend as regularly as they should.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The consistency of approach of all leaders is an example of the effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement. The energy and expertise of the headteacher inspires loyalty and commitment from the whole staff who work together very successfully as a team. Staff share a goal of excellence and have high expectations for themselves and their pupils. One parent wrote, 'Staff enjoy their challenging roles as teachers and emanate a very professional and positive aura. They also uphold commitment, respect and harmony towards their peers. Children benefit from being in this unique schooling environment'. Monitoring, self-evaluation and tracking pupils' progress are rigorous and lead to a clear identification of what needs to be improved and well targeted support. For example, the school's focus on guided reading has ensured that attainment in reading has improved to match that in other subjects.

The highly inclusive ethos of the school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and develop as well-rounded individuals without fear of discrimination. Leaders have developed the school as a very cohesive community in which pupils show tolerance and respect towards others. There are strong links with the local community. The introduction of French has given pupils a taste of another European culture, but opportunities for pupils to have direct contact with pupils from different backgrounds and cultures are at an early stage of partnership development which is why, despite some strong features, community cohesion is satisfactory and not better. Safeguarding procedures are very well developed, known by all staff and applied across all aspects of the school's work. The school ensures that pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The small number of children in the Reception class means that their individual needs are met very well and they get off to a flying start to their time in school. From their starting points, they achieve extremely well and exceed the goals for all areas of their learning by the time they move into the next class. There are very positive trusting relationships with staff and as a result, children are happy, behave very well, settle contentedly into the routines of the day and are extremely well cared for. Children have an excellent understanding of the need to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, before tasting a range of different foods to decide which were most healthy, they knew to wash their hands to 'get rid of the germs'. They play together well and make an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the day by sharing resources amicably and being responsible for tidying away their activities. Children are encouraged to develop their curiosity; for example, they were engrossed in using a microscope to look at insects and told the inspector: 'If you want to see it look really big, look through this bit of the microscope.' They enjoy stories because books and reading are promoted very well. Staff provide children with numerous opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. On occasion, the activities planned are a little too prescriptive which means that sometimes children's ability to think and act creatively is not extended. This, and the fact that learning through free access to the outdoors is limited, are the reasons why provision is good rather than outstanding. Leadership and management are outstanding and ensure that children's well-being and safeguarding procedures are given high priority and there are excellent links with parents and carers and the local Nursery to ensure a very smooth transition into school. Regular assessments keep track of where children are and the next steps in their learning.

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

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	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of those who completed the questionnaire agreed that their children enjoy school and the overwhelming majority agree that they are happy with their child's experience at school. A few disagreed that the school takes account of their suggestions or concerns. These concerns were carefully considered but inspection evidence did not support this view. The inspectors fully support parents' and carers' overwhelmingly positive views of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brookland Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 97 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	82	9	13	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	58	87	8	12	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	69	20	30	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	69	20	30	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	82	11	16	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	67	20	30	0	0	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	78	14	21	0	0	1	1
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)	43	64	21	31	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	75	16	24	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	69	19	28	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	61	18	27	6	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	46	69	19	28	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	87	8	12	0	0	1	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookland Church of England Primary School, Romney Marsh TN29 9QR

I am writing to thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. What a lovely time we had with you. I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and polite and telling us what you thought about your school. You are right to enjoy coming to Brookland because it is an outstanding school. We agree with you and your parents and carers that your school is an exceptionally caring and safe place to be and this, as well as your excellent attitudes to learning and outstanding teaching, helps you make outstanding progress. We were very impressed with the way you all get on so well together and the fact that you care for and respect each other in your work and play. Your behaviour is extremely good.

Your school has improved in lots of ways because the headteacher and all the adults always work very hard to make it better for you, in return you work very hard. By the time you leave, you are doing very well in your English, mathematics and science. You do especially well in using your initiative and becoming independent in your learning; well done for this!

Here are two things that we know will help the school get even better:

- All of you should try to come to school every single day because if you are away, you miss out on important learning.
- School can help you to understand more about the world around you by giving you more opportunities to meet pupils from different backgrounds to your own.

I was lucky enough to hear your fantastic singing in the hall. It was superb and when you sang 'The Body Song', it was hard to tell who was enjoying themselves more 'you or your teachers! It was such a pleasure to see all your happy smiling faces.

Thank you again for all your help and being so interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead inspector

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