

Brooke Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121096
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339866
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Clare Hayes
Headteacher	Mr Mark Ferguson
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2006
School address	High Green Brooke Norwich
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, observed seven teachers and spent the majority of the time observing learning. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work, and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 52 parents or carers, 75 pupils and 16 staff.

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

- what the school is doing to ensure more able pupils attain higher levels in writing
- pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society and how they engage with the wider community
- the impact of the new headteacher on provision and outcomes.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a rural area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. The headteacher has been in post just over a year. The school has the Active Mark award.

The school does not have its own field for sport but makes use of the Parish Hall field a short distance away.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Brooke is a good school where all pupils progress well. Attainment is high and outcomes for pupils are outstanding, including their achievement. From Reception onwards, consistently good teaching enables pupils to acquire and develop the skills they need for the next stage of their education, so that they are very well prepared for secondary school. The new headteacher has won the respect and admiration of the entire school community through his calm and purposeful approach to improvement. As one parent wrote, 'The headteacher is always accessible, and a real presence in the school.'

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school as they find lessons exciting and full of interest. Attendance is consequently high. They say they feel safe, for example knowing all about road safety whether as a pedestrian or a cyclist. Behaviour is good and pupils show consideration towards one another. They take plenty of exercise, as evidenced by the award of the Active Mark, and there is a high participation in clubs. Pupils contribute to the school as peer supporters and play leaders. They join in with church services and put on productions in the Parish hall. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. However, they have not had much first-hand experience of finding out about the different cultures that shape British society.

Teaching engages pupils well by offering a good variety of strategies tailored to their needs and learning styles. One pupil said, 'We have a mix of fun and serious work.' Teachers in all key stages are clear about what pupils need to learn and show them how to assess their own progress in lessons. Pupils work cooperatively in pairs and groups and approach their learning with pride and enthusiasm. While attainment is high in most areas, too few pupils attain the higher levels in writing at the end of Key Stage 1. This is because they do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length in ways of their own choosing, or receive precise written feedback about how they can improve. The curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' good personal development through stimulating topic work that engages them well. The recent project on 'Rainforests' was successful in raising pupils' awareness of ecology and conservation and resulted in them raising funds to protect their own patch of tropical rainforest.

The school cares extremely well for the pupils, valuing them as individuals and ensuring their pastoral needs are fully met. It can point to individual success stories where pupils facing challenging circumstances have thrived in the caring family atmosphere. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and the new headteacher has set out a strong vision and strategy for improvement. He is ably supported in this by an energetic and committed staff team. Together, they have formed an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop through robust self-evaluation. They have worked systematically and successfully at tackling key priorities, such as improving

provision in information and communication technology and raising boys' attainment in writing. Therefore, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 by:
 - giving pupils plenty of opportunities to extend their writing in a variety of imaginative ways
 - ensuring written feedback to pupils helps them to understand how to improve.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the different cultures that make up modern Britain.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make good progress throughout the school, enabling them to reach high levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. All groups of pupils do well, including those with special needs and/or disabilities. This outstanding achievement results from good teaching and a lively curriculum that makes pupils want to learn. For example, during National Science Week, Year 3 and 4 pupils enjoyed building circuits that would cause an alarm to sound. Year 5 pupils relished the challenge of finding the best deal for their teacher on her forthcoming visit to a school in France, applying their number skills in working out which fare represented value for money.

Pupils are excellent ambassadors for promoting healthy lifestyles, giving the inspector tips on losing weight and writing to parents about what items a healthy lunch box might contain. They take part in a good variety of sports, including linking up with the village cricket and tennis clubs. Pupils lead their schoolmates in lively whole school exercise in the playground, when everybody, including staff, joins in. Pupils have become involved in planning a new play park, so showing a keen interest in local issues. The school council influences improvements in school, such as hand driers that work, and leads fund-raising events for good causes. Pupils are happy to take the initiative, for example organising themselves for a talent contest, or making presentations to parents about the perils of habitat-loss in the rainforests. They are enthusiastic about taking on new challenges and develop the personal qualities that prepare them highly effectively for lifelong learning.

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.

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	2
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Year 4 and 5 pupils took delight in making bridges out of potatoes, marshmallows and lasagne verdi as part of their topic, and then in subjecting their structures to various tests of endurance. This imaginative approach to curriculum planning is one of the school's keys to success, as it keeps learning fresh and exciting. On another occasion, Year 3 pupils devised a board game using their numeracy skills to recount the ten plagues of Egypt in the right order. However, there is an element of inconsistency in the curriculum in that, at times, a reliance on worksheets constrains originality and can limit pupils' writing to 'fit in the box'. Teaching keeps pupils alert, with good questioning that makes them think. Teachers use technology well to add interest and pace to lessons. Occasionally, resources are not well suited to the task in hand and the pace of learning slows. Teaching assistants provide good support, enabling pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress from their starting points. In Key Stage 2, marking provides helpful guidance to pupils about the next steps in their learning and they have clear targets for improvement. Some pupils in Key Stage 1, though, do not receive consistent advice about how to develop their writing, which makes it harder for them to attain the higher levels.

Pupils appreciate the high levels of care they receive. One said, 'They're always watching out for us.' Strong links with outside agencies bolster support, including the cluster's parent support adviser and the extended services cluster coordinator. Flexible use of provision means that support is provided where and when it is most needed, increasing its positive impact.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's collegiate style of management has been effective in securing the loyalty and support of staff, governors and parents for his vision. The impact of this is visible in the consistency of good teaching, improvements in pupils' attainment and the strong sense of teamwork operating at all levels throughout the school. Leaders and governors have successfully brought the school out from running a deficit budget, but this has meant the headteacher has had to cover too much staff absence. While this has provided a short-term solution it has eaten into the time available for the headteacher to plan strategically in the longer term. Governors are making good use of the considerable expertise they bring, and hold the school to account for its effectiveness well. The school represents outstanding value for money based on pupils' outcomes.

The school communicates well with parents, who are very supportive of its work. They welcome its inclusive approach, which ensures the vast majority of pupils make good progress whatever their starting points. Consequently, the school promotes equality of opportunity well, and follows the progress of different groups of pupils carefully to make sure they are not falling behind. Safeguarding procedures are effective, with minor amendments required to recording systems. Leaders and governors promote community cohesion well, as there are strong local links and pupils keep in touch with children in France and Spain. The school's European day celebrated different cultures and involved parents in sharing aspects of these countries' traditions. Pupils have some understanding of the multi-cultural nature of British society through their research, but have not had sufficient opportunities to experience it directly.

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

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

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with a range of skills and abilities often above those typically found, except in communication and language, where attainment is lower. They make good progress to reach and often exceed the early learning goals, particularly in reading and writing. Teaching and the curriculum are good, providing children with a wide range of stimulating experiences that develop their early literacy and numeracy skills well. Activities are linked creatively to a class theme, such as 'The Sea'. Children enjoyed sitting in a quiet area listening to whale stories. The outside area is restricted by the limitations of the school site, but is used effectively to promote all aspects of learning. Children have good personal skills and are able to sustain concentration when working at tasks. There is careful assessment of children's achievements. These are recorded in commercially produced booklets but, while fit for purpose, lack the depth and character of a personal record of learning. Staff plan around children's general interests, but do not focus systematically on every child over a period of time to identify their individual interests and aspirations. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well, with a committed staff team who understand how young children learn and provide a good range of opportunities for them to thrive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents have positive views about the school and in particular of the impact of the new headteacher, whose changes they welcome. All those who returned questionnaires agreed that their children enjoyed school and that the teaching was good. A few had

concerns about behaviour, but inspectors found this to be good too.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brooke Voluntary Controlled 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	63	19	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	62	19	37	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	46	26	50	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	37	28	54	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	50	25	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	40	28	54	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	37	31	60	2	4	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)	9	17	37	71	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	33	30	58	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	23	32	62	3	6	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	29	30	58	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	35	27	52	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	48	25	48	1	2	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.



22 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brooke Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School, Norwich, NR15 1HP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. Yours is a good school with some outstanding features. Here are some of them.

Your attainment is high by the end of Year 6.

You say you feel safe at school, and know all about avoiding danger.

You have an excellent understanding of how to remain healthy and take plenty of exercise.

You are very well prepared with the skills and personal qualities you need for secondary school.

Your attendance is very good.

The school cares for you extremely well.

We noticed how much you enjoy writing, and have asked your teachers to make sure that pupils in Key Stage 1, in particular, have lots of opportunities to write in a variety of ways. We have also asked them to show you exactly what you need to do to improve your writing. It is good that you are getting to know pupils in other countries such as France and Spain and we think it would be great if you could get to know pupils from different cultures and backgrounds who live in this country as well. You can help by suggesting things you might do together.

Thank you once again for your help. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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