

The Brook School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131602
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	341175
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Grace Marriott

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandy Tong
Headteacher	Miss Fiona Dowley
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They looked at the school's plans for improvement, curriculum documents, samples of pupils' work, tracking data and the minutes of governing body meetings. One hundred and twenty two parental questionnaires, 20 staff and 102 pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised.

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

- the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, particularly the use of assessment and target setting, to determine whether pupils are making outstanding progress
- the impact of strategies to ensure that boys achieve as well as girls in reading, and girls achieve as well as boys in mathematics
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management in evaluating the quality of the school's work and planning for improvement.

Information about the school

The Brook is an average-sized infant school. Most pupils live fairly close to the school and the majority of them are from White British families. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is relatively small. The needs are in relation to speech and language or moderate learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes two Reception classes and an independent Nursery which is managed by the school. The Nursery was inspected as part of the school inspection. Most children transfer to the school's Reception classes, but this is not automatic and some children join the school at the start of the Reception year. The school has achieved a variety of awards including the Eco School and Healthy School awards. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for five weeks. The school also has a new chair of governors.

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

Pupils think this an outstanding school and inspectors agree. 'My school is wicked, I love it', 'It's a brilliant school', 'It's a great school because I enjoy learning and the teacher makes lessons fun', 'It's the best school in the whole world' are typical of the comments from pupils and these are echoed in the comments from many parents. As one wrote, 'It's a fabulous little school with a real community feel.' The school is bright and welcoming and provides an excellent environment for learning in all stages.

The school fosters pupils' self-esteem extremely well so that the children are confident and feel highly valued. From the Nursery onwards, behaviour and relationships are excellent. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in excellent attendance and attitudes towards learning. Pupils make consistently good, and often outstanding, progress. They attain high standards, especially in reading. Girls have tended to achieve better than boys in reading and boys to achieve better than girls in mathematics. But, in both cases, the gap is closing as a result of the specific focus on this in planning and teaching. Pupils' attainment is high because of excellent teaching and a rich and exciting curriculum which engages pupils from their first days in school in Nursery or Reception. It encourages them to enjoy learning and enables them to work together to learn and apply new knowledge and skills. Children have many opportunities to work in different groups and teams.

Activities are clearly targeted to the range of abilities in the classes and lesson planning is strongly focused on how best to support and challenge all pupils. The quality of questioning is particularly good. Learning is underpinned by excellent relationships and teachers' high expectations. The very strong teamwork enables teaching assistants to be very effective. Assessment and target setting have improved significantly. The use of assessment is generally good and frequently outstanding. In the Early Years Foundation Stage it is consistently outstanding. The school's self-evaluation shows that staff know that even better use could be made of assessment in tracking progress and planning for individual and group needs. The information on progress is used very well to identify early those pupils who require additional support.

Pupils are keen to contribute to their community. They take their responsibilities, for example as 'Eco Warriors', very seriously and care well for each other and their environment. They are really proud that the school has received the 'green flag' as an eco-school and were keen to tell inspectors about the solar panels which had recently been installed. They are also very aware of how to be healthy, which reflects all the work the school has done to achieve the Healthy School award.

Leadership and management are excellent at all levels and staff work well together to

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give pupils a high quality education. The recently appointed headteacher acknowledges that she has inherited an excellent school and a strong staff team who are rightly proud of the school. She has, however, very quickly established herself and gained the respect of pupils, staff and parents. She is working very well with staff and governors to ensure that the school continues to build on its achievements. As a result of thorough and accurate evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement, which has led to highly effective action, the school has moved from being good with aspects that are excellent, to being outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of assessment in Years 1 and 2 to track progress and plan for individual and group needs

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The attainment of more able pupils is very high as illustrated by the large proportion of pupils who reach the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who enjoy their lessons and even very young pupils are often able to work with sustained concentration. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils worked very hard, responded to the high level of challenge, and made real progress in learning to tell the time confidently and accurately, using their knowledge of fractions to identify half and quarter hours. The books and folders in all classes contain an impressive quantity of work and show that pupils have made excellent progress in the first few weeks of this term. The attainment of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities reflects the good, and often outstanding, progress they make. These pupils are very well supported in class and through specialist individual or group work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The pupils responded exceptionally well to a lively assembly on fair trade which was linked to the theme of harvest. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and enjoy physical activities. Pupils say that they are safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to ensure their own safety and are considerate of the safety and well-being of others. They play an active part in the school and local community and feel confident that adults will listen to them. An excellent example of this is the recent work on road safety initiated by pupils, which is being further developed by the Highways Agency and the local police.

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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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	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	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

This is a school where every child really does matter. Staff know their pupils and families very well and this results in a highly inclusive school in which pupils are valued and can make outstanding progress in learning and personal development. The speed with which children have settled this term indicates that the arrangements for starting school and changing classes are excellent. Parents made similar comments about the transition to the local junior school.

The quality of teaching is never less than good and is mostly outstanding. From the Nursery to Year 2, pupils are helped to develop their curiosity, interests and independent learning skills. Lessons are very well planned to take account of different abilities and needs. Excellent subject knowledge and understanding of how young children learn were seen in lively presentations and effective use of technology, by pupils as well as teachers, which inspired pupils to want to learn. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught very well through interesting themes as well as separate sessions. For example, the challenge in the display on wild life in the Arctic region required pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in arithmetic. Work on Judaism in religious education had produced some outstanding writing. Special themed weeks and outstanding enrichment and extension activities, which include many visitors and visits to places of interest, add to the enjoyment of learning.

Teachers are using assessment very well, particularly the day-to-day information. They question pupils very effectively to assess their understanding and challenge them further. Pupils are involved in assessing their own progress and excellent marking encourages them to take a pride in their work and know exactly what they need to do to

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improve it. In one questionnaire a pupil disagreed with the idea that adults help him to improve his work because, as he wrote, 'I can do it myself.'

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?

There is no sense of complacency and leadership and management are very clearly focused on ensuring that the school continues to improve. The governors provide an excellent balance of challenge and support. They are fully involved in evaluating the work of the school and setting priorities. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is translated into very effective development planning which has a clear focus on teaching and learning and using resources to make excellent provision for all pupils. The depth of leadership and management skills is considerable and extends beyond the leadership team, with subject coordinators all making a significant contribution. These factors and the improvement since the previous inspection indicate that the capacity to achieve further improvements is outstanding.

The partnerships with parents ensure that pupils' needs are well met. Drop-in sessions, workshops, surveys and newsletters, as well as the more formal meetings and reports help to keep parents well informed and involved. The school works exceptionally well with a wide range of other agencies and local schools to provide high quality support for all pupils' learning and personal development. Safeguarding arrangements are given a very high priority and the school deals sensitively with difficult issues. The very strong focus on inclusion ensures that all pupils have access to all that the school offers. Staff monitor these aspects, and the policies which support them, very carefully to make sure staff are kept up to date and good practice is maintained. Pupils have an exceptional understanding for their age of the local, national and global communities and issues, and of the part they can play in these different communities. This reflects the school's highly effective action in promoting community cohesion. Governors are keen to see this taken further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start this stage with skills and knowledge that are very much in line with expectations for their age. In both Nursery and Reception, adults are very skilled at helping children to settle in quickly. Only a few weeks into the school year the children play happily together, are rapidly developing in confidence and independence, and show very positive attitudes to learning. They make excellent progress in all areas and, by the start of Year 1, most children are working above the levels expected, particularly in the early stages of communication, language and literacy and in their personal and physical development. The Nursery and Reception areas provide a colourful and stimulating indoor and outdoor environment and staff have taken great care to ensure that this is equally appealing to boys and girls. The balance of direct teaching and opportunities for children to explore the world for themselves is very good and fosters independence. Staff have high expectations for the children. The excellent planning, based on detailed assessments of progress, enables the strong staff team to provide interesting activities with different levels of challenge which are very well matched to individual and group needs. The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage reflects the excellent leadership and the continuing drive for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires, although some felt unable to answer several questions because their children had only just started school. Parents were strongly supportive of the school, with the overwhelming majority saying they are very pleased with the education it provides for their children. Inspectors agree with these positive views. A few parents were critical of the information they receive, particularly in how to support their children's learning. A few others did not think that the school is making effective provision for their child's individual needs. The inspection evidence does not support these views. Inspectors found that the school uses a wide variety of very effective methods both to involve parents and provide support for individual children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Brook 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 received 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 223 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	79	25	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	94	77	25	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	36	64	53	6	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	48	51	42	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	69	57	43	35	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	55	47	39	3	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	81	66	39	32	1	1	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)	71	58	37	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	52	45	37	3	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	53	44	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	48	53	43	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	53	45	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	90	74	28	23	1	1	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.



15 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Brook Infant School, Crawley RH10 7JE

Thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed the time we spent with you finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

You told us how much you enjoy school and described it to us using words and sentences like 'brilliant' and 'it's the best school in the whole world'. You are also very proud that the school has achieved the 'green flag' eco award. We learnt a lot about recycling and solar panels from you. You are right to be proud of your school because it is outstanding. The adults look after you very well to make sure that everyone has a chance to learn. We all saw how well you behave. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a very good start with lots of interesting things to do and learn about. They play and learn very well and this helps them when they move into Year 1. In Years 1 and 2 you carry on working hard and learning because teachers make your lessons interesting and fun so that you want to do well. You are very good at reading and lots of you are also very good at mathematics. You understand a lot about how to stay safe which is very important.

To help make the school even better, we have asked all the people who help to run it to make sure that teachers make the best possible use of all the information they have about how well you are doing, to help them plan the right sort of work for you. We hope you will continue to work hard and enjoy everything you do.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and very best wishes from all the inspectors.

Yours faithfully

Grace Marriott

Lead inspector

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