

Brooksward School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132210
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	341313
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2010
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sid Hewitt
Headteacher	Deborah Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2007
School address	Tower Drive Milton Keynes MK14 6JZ
Telephone number	01908 605605
Fax number	01908 663861
Email address	debbie.dawson@milton-keynes.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons and 12 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of staff, pupils and governors. They observed the school's work and looked at documents including pupils' work, progress monitoring records, procedures, policies and the school development plan. They also scrutinised the 68 responses to the questionnaires completed by parents and carers. They looked in detail at the following

- how the school supports the growing number of pupils who join the school throughout the year
- how effectively assessment systems are used to help pupils make

Information about the school

This average size primary school serves an increasingly socially and ethnically diverse community. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils at an early stage of learning English is higher than in most schools with the most frequent languages spoken at home being Somali, Bengali and Punjabi. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than those expected is much higher than in most schools. The school has a slightly above average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and these cover the whole spectrum of needs. Among the awards obtained by the school are the Artsmark Gold and the International School Award at foundation level. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in two Reception classes. An on-site nursery is managed by a private provider.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Brooksward School provides a satisfactory education. At the end of Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average and this represents satisfactory progress from pupils' starting points. Progress made by the different groups of pupils varies between year groups because of variations, for example, in the proportions of boys and girls at an early stage of speaking English. The large number of pupils who join the school throughout the year further complicates comparisons. These pupils have their needs quickly assessed and good support provided through additional resources. They soon start to make the same progress as others. The impact for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more immediate and they make good progress. Pupils identify concerns about the behaviour of a few pupils and this was confirmed during the inspection in a small minority of lessons but it is well managed. Pupils say they feel safe in school and enjoy most of the lessons and being with their friends.

Teaching is improving and is currently satisfactory with generally good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Work does not consistently match the needs of all pupils and sometimes it is too easy. This is, however, improving as teachers are increasingly using the assessment systems in place. Teachers are supported well by teaching assistants and external specialists. The good curriculum supports the personal development of pupils well, including good support for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. Enrichment opportunities, including arts and language provision, are very good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there has been good development of the outdoor learning area but at present, it is not used to support all the areas of learning.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong focus on the support given to individual pupils. Their impact on raising standards is only satisfactory at present, although there are signs of improvement. Progress on issues from the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is still more to do in raising standards of literacy, but pupils are given good guidance on how to improve their work. They say, however, they are not always clear how well they are doing compared to teachers' expectations. Inspectors found this to be the case because the use of targets and guidance to pupils on their work, are less well established in mathematics and science than in English. Leaders' self-evaluation accurately identifies the strengths and areas for development in the school. Teaching and progress are improving, especially in Years 5 and 6. Action to raise attainment has had a rapid effect in Key Stage 2 and this confirms that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment by:
 - ensuring consistent use of targets across English, mathematics and science so that all pupils always know what level they are working at and what they are capable of
 - using assessment systems consistently within the classroom to set appropriately challenging work to enable all pupils to make the progress they should.
- Ensure that the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides learning experiences to help children develop their skills in all the required areas of learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

All pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, make at least satisfactory progress. Better progress is more evident in the upper school. In many Key Stage 2 lessons, for example in a Year 5 phonics lesson, good progress was well monitored by the teacher who ensured that all pupils gave feedback to show how well they understood the topic. Similar strategies were less frequent in Key Stage 1. Most pupils say they enjoy their learning in all subjects. In a Year 2 art lesson for instance, pupils made good progress because they really enjoyed the activity as it gave them the opportunity to use their creativity and imagination. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high quality support they receive. Pupils' attendance is average. Through developing good personal skills and attaining satisfactory standards of literacy and numeracy, they are being prepared for their future economic well-being. Behaviour overall is good both in and out of lessons, although occasionally, where teaching truly motivates pupils, their behaviour is outstanding. Bullying is rare and pupils say that where it does occur adults deal with issues quickly and well. The majority of pupils eat healthy food and join in sport activities. They make a good contribution to the school community, for example through the school council and by being play buddies. They are actively involved with the local community, with many links associated with the arts, including working with a local artist to help brighten the children's ward at the local hospital. Pupils actively support many national and international charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The rich range of cultural diversity in the school helps pupils know about different faiths and cultures and there is racial harmony within the school.

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

How effective is the provision?

Within the classroom there is an increasing proportion of good teaching. This needs to increase further and consistently to ensure that pupils' progress and attainment improve across the school. Teachers use resources well and create a stimulating learning environment. Teachers and support staff work well together to help pupils who find it difficult to concentrate in lessons. The use of assessment although improving, is inconsistent across the school and is generally better in Years 5 and 6. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English is good.

The curriculum caters well for the majority of pupils, especially in promoting their personal skills. There are many opportunities associated with art and music reflecting the school being given the Artsmark Gold award. The curriculum is made exciting for pupils through themed projects such as science, art and healthy living weeks. The involvement of a French assistant in the teaching of languages has contributed to the school being awarded the International Award at foundation level. The broad curriculum is beginning to have an impact in raising standards but this is not yet consistent across the school. There is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and exciting residential visits, such as the one to Snowdonia.

Good procedures are in place that encourage high standards of behaviour and improved attendance. Transition arrangements with the secondary school are good. Pupils say they are given good information and feel confident about moving on.

Systems to support the welfare of pupils are all in place with a secure approach to health and safety. The school is committed to the concepts of equal opportunities and

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demonstrates that it is an inclusive school by making every effort to avoid excluding pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is supported by staff at all levels in her vision to improve the school. All levels of management are involved in monitoring pupils' progress and identifying where additional support is needed, but the impact of this is only just beginning to show. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching has improved as a result of increased monitoring of pupils' progress and staff training that is helping teachers plan better lessons. Resources in the school are well managed and satisfactory value for money is provided.

The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to opportunities around the school, such as joining clubs and taking part in sport, and that there is no discrimination. Within lessons the variation in the use of assessment means that the work does not always match the needs of all pupils and their progress is variable

Governors provide satisfactory support and challenge as well as ensuring that statutory requirements are met. Governors are active within the school and are a growing influence in the school.. They understand what needs to be done and have an effective partnership with the leadership team.

The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is good. Leaders know the community well and have a clear action plan built into the school development plan. Good relationships have been established with parents and carers as was observed by inspectors, when some joined their children for a cookery afternoon. Links with the local community are in place and the diverse community within the school is used to develop a range of visits and visitors. Safeguarding procedures are all in place. Site security is robust and ensured through high quality fencing and controlled access to buildings. Child protection procedures are good and these are supported through effective partnerships with external agencies.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Within this safe and caring environment children make satisfactory progress. They enter the Reception class with skills and capabilities which are below those expected for their age, especially in their language and communication skills. Satisfactory teaching results in children making progress in linking sounds and letters and improvements in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are happy and polite. Some prefer to play on their own while others from different cultural backgrounds mix and play well together. They have access to fruit, milk and water which helps them develop healthy eating habits.

Adults are sensitive to children's needs and are good at promoting positive attitudes to learning. They use a range of teaching strategies and resources to provide learning experiences which generally engage and interest children. Children have access to an outdoor play area which supports their gross motor skills and promotes their physical health. However, this play area is not well developed as it does not provide sufficient opportunities to support the development of skills across all the required areas of learning.

Induction procedures are in place ensuring that children settle quickly into their life in school. Staff work well with parents, carers and external agencies ensuring the appropriate support for children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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

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Views of parents and carers

Approximately a quarter of parents and carers expressed their views and most are pleased with the school. The general feeling from written comments is that the school provides very good help and support to the pupils, with a typical comment being, 'we have had constant help and support from all staff and pupils'. A very few had individual concerns which were considered as part of the inspection process

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	69	16	24	4	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	68	22	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	57	24	35	1	1	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	50	26	38	4	6	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	38	56	25	37	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	54	27	40	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	47	35	51	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)	31	46	28	41	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	47	30	44	3	4	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	49	34	50	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	41	33	49	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	38	56	25	37	4	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	59	23	34	4	6	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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 pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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.



23 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brooksward School, Milton Keynes, MK14 6JZ

Thank you for welcoming us and helping us when we came to your school. It was good to talk to many of you in your classroom and around the school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education.

There are many things we admire about your school and these are a few of them:

- you are making satisfactory progress in your work as a result of improving teaching
- you told us that you feel safe in school and that adults look after you and help you learn
- arrangements to ensure you are safe are good
- you get on well with your teachers and with each other
- you have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy
- school leaders work extremely well with other specialists to support your learning and care
- you get on really well with pupils from different backgrounds

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to make it better. They

- to use the outdoor area in the Reception class to provide learning experiences that help children develop their skills in all the required areas of learning
- to make consistent use of target setting and information about 'levels' so that you all know how well you are doing compared to how well you should be doing
- use information teachers have about your progress to make sure you are always set sufficiently challenging work so that you can make as much progress as you should.

You can help by working hard and coming to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood

Lead Inspector

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