

Brook Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134961
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	341579
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	466
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Ross Stewart
Headteacher	Rebecca Abraham
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Seventeen teachers were observed teaching 20 lessons. Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of pupils and informal discussions were held with parents and carers on the playground. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment data. The inspectors analysed 47 questionnaires from parents and carers, 104 from pupils and 27 from staff.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress in reading
- the impact of pupils' attitudes and behaviour on their learning and progress
- how well teachers use assessment to promote pupils' learning and progress
- how well basic skills are reinforced across the curriculum
- the capacity of leadership to take the school forward

Information about the school

This is a large, inner city school where the vast majority of pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils speak English as an additional language and one in four is at an early stage of learning English. These include a sizeable number of pupils from refugee or asylum-seeking families. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Early Years Foundation Stage pupils are taught in two Nursery classes and two Reception classes. The school has Healthy School status.

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

This school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The curriculum provides a good range of sporting activities which contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Some elements in the school's pastoral provision for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are excellent. Good arrangements for safeguarding ensure that pupils feel safe in school.

Although attainment is low, it has improved considerably in Key Stage 2 since the school was last inspected in 2007. In 2009, results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 fell just short of the government floor target of 55% for pupils achieving Level 4 in English and in mathematics. These were the best results for five years. Pupils in Year 6 are currently achieving at least at a similar level to their fellow pupils last year from a lower starting point.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but some weaknesses in planning and the use of additional and/or supporting adults restrict their achievement, especially when they are given opportunities to learn independently. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and 2, although there is some variation in rates of progress between year groups. This variation is largely due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and shortfalls in opportunities for pupils to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Senior leaders have recently implemented an improved tracking system, which has enabled them to acquire a sharper view of pupils' progress. They have not yet had time to use it purposefully to match the curriculum fully to pupils' needs.

During the headteacher's maternity leave last year, weaknesses in leadership emerged which created instability and resulted in substantial discontinuity in staffing in September 2009. The headteacher, supported well by the local authority, has acted decisively to tackle these issues, and has succeeded in restoring the quality of teaching and learning to its former level. Good appointments have been made in order to strengthen middle management, but the work of these new leaders is at an early stage. School self-evaluation is accurate in most respects and the school's action plan provides it with clear guidelines for the future. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate children's progress in Nursery and Reception by:
 - planning more efficiently to provide better links between children's learning indoors and outdoors

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- planning more stimulating activities to challenge children in their independent learning
- ensuring additional adults are used more effectively to develop children's speaking and listening skills and to assess their progress.
- Raise standards by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning is carefully focused on the skills teachers expect pupils to have acquired by the end of the lesson
 - ensuring that teachers match work more closely to challenge all pupils
 - ensuring basic skills are more effectively reinforced in other subjects
 - making sharp use of the tracking system to match the curriculum more effectively to pupils' needs.
- Increase the opportunities for other senior and middle leaders to develop their skills and to contribute more fully to school improvement.

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

Children's skills when they join the Nursery vary, but overall they are well below those expected for their age. In all years, standards are low but this is affected by the significant number of pupils who join or leave the school at different times. Lessons seen during the inspection confirmed a picture of rising attainment in Years 1, 4 and 6 and satisfactory achievement. Pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 1 have shown some improvement this year, but this has not been fully sustained in other year groups. Progress for all groups of learners, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, is satisfactory demonstrating sustained improvement. These pupils make better progress in lessons on letters and sounds than in supported reading. Some pupils have weak speaking skills, which affects both their engagement in lessons and confidence in handling technical vocabulary. Pupils make better progress in science than in mathematics, because they enjoy the well-planned 'hands-on' activities which make them think hard and provide them with good opportunities to work collaboratively and test out their theories. Year 4 pupils, for example, were able to identify circuit parts and make accurate predictions about what might happen if extra batteries were added to the circuit.

Pupils enjoy school, and most are keen to do well and participate in lessons, but others are either too passive or lose focus for short periods, which holds back their progress. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory across the school. Sometimes, their behaviour is exemplary in lessons, but on other occasions, some boys display challenging behaviour and spoil learning for others. Despite the school's good intentions, some boys are boisterous on the playground. Pupils contribute to the school effectively as school councillors, for example, in improving toilet facilities and as monitors, but they have few opportunities to become involved with the wider community. Pupils of different backgrounds mix with each other well, so that relationships are harmonious. Pupils'

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good appreciation of healthy lifestyles is reflected in the school's Healthy School status. Pupils' attendance is usually good but this has dropped a little recently due to external factors, such as swine flu and volcanic ash. As a result of pupils' improving standards, they are prepared satisfactorily for secondary school and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching, although satisfactory overall, is improving and some good features are apparent. Teachers have accepted and acted on guidance which has improved their practice and consequently expectations for pupils' progress have risen. Relationships are mainly constructive, as teachers use praise well to encourage pupils, and this has a positive impact on pupils' willingness to learn. Good teaching in a Year 1 literacy lesson, using the imaginary picture of a sandwich, helped pupils structure the three parts of their fantasy story and resolve the problem of how to create a happy ending. Good practice is not yet firmly established. For example, in a less successful mathematics lesson in Year 3, pupils were unable to convert millilitres into litres because they had not had sufficient practice in using decimal points to enable them to tackle this

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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exercise successfully. On other occasions, activities are too mundane or lack sufficient challenge and this slows the pace of learning. Teachers' use of oral and written assessment reflects this inconsistent pattern and as a result, success criteria and pupils' individual targets vary in the extent to which they actively promote pupils' progress.

While support programmes have been used effectively to boost standards, some shortfalls in planning and monitoring the curriculum have reduced opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their basic skills in other subjects. External specialists are used well to enhance pupils' participation in, and enjoyment of, sporting activities. Pupils have good opportunities to develop wider skills, for example through tuition in musical instruments, and pupils are regularly alerted in well-planned assemblies on how to stay safe in different situations outside school.

Pupils emphasise that they feel safe, that their teachers support them well and deal with any issues they have sensitively and promptly. The learning mentor works very effectively with targeted pupils to improve their social skills and self-esteem. Staff make consistent use of the 'stay on green' behavioural code to manage pupils' behaviour and this works well with most pupils. Outstanding use is made of multi-agency meetings to ensure that information on pupils with specific needs is shared effectively and that action is taken speedily to address their problems. The school monitors and promotes attendance purposefully. Arrangements for helping pupils to transfer smoothly to secondary school are well established.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has strong aspirations for pupils' progress and provides purposeful leadership and direction to the school's work. She has put the school back on a firm footing after its recent downturn. Rigorous action to challenge and eliminate weaknesses in the work of individual staff has resulted in improvements in performance in teaching and learning. In this task, she has been supported exceptionally well by consultants from the local authority. The school's action plan is clear-sighted and firmly focused on raising standards. Recent staffing changes have disrupted continuity at other levels of management but this has improved as colleagues settle into their new roles. These arrangements have not yet bedded in and subject leaders do not as yet play an influential role in school improvement. The governing body has a sound overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and makes a telling contribution to the school's

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good arrangements for safeguarding. The school's policies for safeguarding are tailored carefully to meet the needs of its pupils and individual concerns are carefully logged and meticulously followed up. The school promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily, as reflected in the outcomes. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, as it still has to evaluate fully the impact of its work in this area.

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
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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in Nursery and Reception but their learning is more successful in the teacher-directed activities rather than in the activities they choose for themselves. For example, in a successful part of a lesson in Nursery, children learnt how adding ingredients to ginger play dough affected its composition, texture and smell. This promising start was not built on well enough as the follow-up activities did not stimulate their imagination enough. In part, this is due to some limitations in the layout of the accommodation, which reduce planned opportunities for children to reinforce their learning outside. There are missed opportunities both indoors and outdoors to link activities purposefully, and to engage children who are less keen to take part. There are also some missed opportunities to support and help children through questioning to develop their speaking and listening skills. Children's attitudes and behaviour are mainly good, but when they are less excited by their learning, some lose motivation, and are passive, while a few become noisy. While most children understand the importance of sharing and taking turns, some children are reluctant to support each other in tidying up and this is sometimes too easily accepted by the staff. The curriculum places a suitable

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emphasis on keeping children safe and educating them to make healthy choices about food. The setting is led and managed satisfactorily. The school has implemented a new tracking system to provide leaders with a clearer overview of children's progress and some good plans are in place to improve assessment procedures and restructure the accommodation for September 2010.

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' responses to the questionnaire reflect a good level of satisfaction with the school's work. The level of responses was low and too few written comments were received to detect a pattern of either positive or negative views. The responses indicate a few concerns regarding pupils' behaviour. Inspectors' findings endorse these comments but also noted pupils' comments that behaviour had improved since the reinstatement of the behaviour code. Inspectors judge that not enough teaching is consistently good and consequently are unable to endorse the very positive responses in the table below to this question.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brook Community 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 466 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	62	17	36	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	22	47	22	47	0	0	2	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	55	21	45	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	38	24	51	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	43	24	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	28	33	70	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	28	26	55	0	0	1	2
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)	19	40	19	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	23	29	62	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	36	20	43	6	13	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	30	19	40	3	6	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	20	43	23	49	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	51	21	45	1	2	1	2

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 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.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brook Community Primary School, Hackney E8 1AS

I would like to thank you for your help when we inspected your school and to share with you what we found out.

Yours is a satisfactory school. It is clear, as you say, that you feel safe in school and the school looks after you well. You enjoy school and take part in lots of sport which helps you understand how important it is to be healthy. Most of you behave well. Some boys do not behave well which spoils learning and play for the others

By the time you leave school, in Year 6, for secondary school, your standards are low. However, you make satisfactory progress from when you started school. To improve your standards further, we have asked the school to make sure:

- staff in the Nursery and Reception plan more carefully and give children more exciting activities to help them learn better
- staff in the Nursery and Reception take every chance to improve children's speaking and listening skills and check up on children's learning
- teachers are really clear about the skills they want you to have practised by the end of a lesson and check that their planning gives you good chances to learn these skills
- teachers match work carefully to ensure you are challenged and that you have better chances to practise English and mathematics in other subjects
- teachers match work carefully to ensure you are challenged and that you have better chances to practise English and mathematics in other subjects
- staff make good use of what they know about your levels to match the curriculum better to your needs
- some new senior and middle leaders have good chances to check up on the school's work.

You can help by trying hard in lessons and making sure you always behave well.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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