

Brandon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135207
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	341628
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Meshiel Brown
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Charlton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Carr Avenue Brandon Durham DH7 8NL
Telephone number	0191 3780124
Fax number	0191 3789089
Email address	brandon@durhamlearning.net

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2010
Inspection number	341628

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 teachers and visited 17 lessons. They held meetings with the parent support advisor, the School Improvement Partner, governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning, policies and documents relating to safeguarding pupils, the records of the assessments of pupils' work and the tracking of their progress, the school improvement plan, the school's plan to bring about community cohesion and the school's records regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. The inspectors also took into account the views expressed in the questionnaires completed by 19 staff, 43 pupils and 117 parents and carers.

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

- why standards are not improving more rapidly when the school claims the quality of teaching is improving and other aspects of provision are good
- the impact of the actions taken by the school to improve pupils' attendance
- the impact of partnerships and the contribution to community cohesion on the outcomes for pupils
- the impact of leadership and management on the drive for improvement.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average size primary school formed in September 2008 from the amalgamation of Brandon Infant and Junior schools. The proportion of pupils who claim a free school meal is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A well-above-average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Following staffing turbulence in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a new key stage leader took up post in September 2009. The school has been in receipt of a number of awards in recent years, including Healthy Schools, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Rights Respecting School Award, International School Award and the Sportsmark Award.

The school shares its site with a privately run child care facility. This provision did not form part of this inspection but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

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 is a satisfactory school. Its greatest strengths are in strong pastoral support for pupils and in the school's work in creating an orderly and harmonious community. Staff are fully committed to providing the pupils in their care with good care and support. Leaders and managers have introduced a number of new initiatives aimed at giving staff and pupils in the newly amalgamated school a shared sense of purpose. For example, the scheme to become a 'Rights Respecting School' has had a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and what actions they need to take to ensure that they stay fit and healthy. They have good social skills and a well-developed understanding of faiths and cultures different from their own. Sound systems to promote equal opportunity ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress from their wide range of starting points to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Despite the school's best efforts to bring about improvements, attendance is low. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress, particularly for those few pupils who are persistently absent.

Teaching and curricular provision are satisfactory. In the best lessons, activities link different subjects together and provide pupils with a real purpose for their learning. A range of teaching styles are used and pupils are fully involved in all parts of the lesson. When teaching is satisfactory, teachers follow national guidelines in their planning and their subject knowledge is secure. There are consistent strengths in how well teachers manage pupils and this ensures that learning is not disrupted by instances of poor behaviour. However, lessons lack creativity and learning is too closely directed by the teacher. Although teachers' assessments of how well pupils are doing are accurate, the use of this information to support teaching and learning is not fully effective. As a result of these inconsistencies, pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good.

The school's procedures for self-evaluation are satisfactory. Better systems for measuring pupils' progress are assisting leaders and managers in their drive to improve school provision. Actions taken to improve pupils' writing skills are beginning to bear fruit and standards are rising. This demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement. However, systems to evaluate the work of the school have been amended and updated without the full involvement of all stakeholders in the process. Consequently, not all staff, parents and carers or pupils fully subscribe to the vision for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress, by:

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

- improving pupils' attendance
- providing pupils with curricular opportunities which capture their imagination and generate their enthusiasm for learning
- providing pupils in Key Stage 2 with more opportunities to practise their skills by linking subjects together.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information effectively to reshape tasks and provide work that matches the abilities of different groups of pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - involving all stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work
 - establishing a shared vision for improvement.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Children's achievement is satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities say how much they like life at school and they generally make satisfactory progress. Sound support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make the same progress as other pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. When lessons spark pupils' interest and enjoyment, they are busy and productive. Good behaviour is a feature of most lessons. Pupils generally enjoy their activities and are keen to get to grips with what they have to do. This comes across strongly in the pride they take to present their work carefully. Most pupils work together well, they readily help each other and are sympathetic to those pupils who are worried or upset. These qualities are at their best when tasks are practical or give pupils the chance to participate through plenty of discussion as a whole class or with a partner.

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and the impact that their actions will have on others. However, school records indicate that at times a small number of pupils struggle to put this knowledge into practice and, therefore, pupils' behaviour is judged to be satisfactory overall. Pupils talk confidently about how to deal with risky situations. For example, they are aware of the dangers that can occur when using new technology and the steps they should take to keep themselves safe. Most pupils eat healthily and take part in some sort of physical activity. Older pupils develop good business and enterprise skills. Low attendance is a contributing factor in why pupils' progress remains satisfactory overall.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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	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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning and of curricular provision are satisfactory. Whilst some good teaching was observed during the inspection, not all lessons have the same degree of creativity, pace or challenge as those that are the most successful.

Information on pupils' current knowledge and understanding is not used effectively enough to reshape tasks or to ensure that activities are fully matched to individual needs. The school is yet to ensure the operation of whole-school systems, for example, inconsistencies remain in the way in which teachers share learning intentions with pupils and in how they mark pupils' work. There are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently or to take responsibility for their own learning.

Business enterprise is one area where creativity and independence are promoted well. Partnerships with local businesses are effectively developed to provide older pupils with experience of the world of work. For pupils in Key Stage 1, the curriculum is enriched well through a number of visits to places of local interest. This helps to add excitement to pupils' learning and is used as a focus to link different subjects together. This is less evident in Key Stage 2 where subjects are often taught in isolation, with fewer opportunities for pupils to practise their key skills.

The quality of personal care and support is good, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who need social or emotional support. The provision benefits from the good links with local authority support services. For example,

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

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

the work of the parent support advisor has resulted in significant improvement in the attendance of some pupils who have been persistently absent. Effective communication within the school and with local secondary schools ensures a smooth transfer between the different stages of education.

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 impact of leadership and management is satisfactory. However, there is variation in the extent to which all staff have embraced the senior management team's vision for the direction of the school. Many of the actions taken to drive improvement have not been in place long enough for their full impact to be seen. For example, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not yet sharp enough to iron out inconsistencies in teaching. Governors are supportive of the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They are not yet fully involved in planning for improvement or in holding leaders to account for its performance.

Procedures for safeguarding have been fully reviewed and are satisfactory. The promotion of equal opportunities and systems for tackling discrimination are sound. The school now regularly checks the performance of different groups and, with support of the local authority, has mapped out the provision needed for those needing additional support with their learning. Leaders actively promote community cohesion within the school and beyond. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the lifestyles of people from religious, ethnic and social groups which are different to their own. Links with schools in Great Britain and in other countries, make a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development. Recent work in the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased parental involvement and is intended to have a continuing effect as pupils move through the school.

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

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

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

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

When children start school their skills and knowledge vary significantly, but the majority are below those levels expected for their age. A significant minority have delayed language skills. Children enjoy their learning and they make satisfactory progress. Activities are planned around a central theme and there is a good balance between those led by adults and those which children choose for themselves. During the inspection, children were fully involved in activities linked to the story of the Gingerbread man. More-able Reception children used their early writing skills to record recipes, whilst younger Nursery children enjoyed developing their fine motor skills when cutting out and making puppets. Children quickly learn to play well together and share equipment. They follow instructions well and demonstrate a good understanding of why this is necessary to ensure their safety. Welfare arrangements are secure and healthy living, in particular, is promoted well. The newly-appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader has quickly established good systems of communication in the staff team. She has used her expertise and good knowledge of how young children learn to plan a curriculum which ensures children's learning builds from Nursery through to the Reception classes. However, the quality of learning is at times hindered by the way in which the accommodation is organised. This is particularly the case with regard to outdoor learning experiences for Reception children. As a result, opportunities are missed to create an effective free-flow of learning between indoor and outdoor spaces. Whilst the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made a good start, leadership and management are currently satisfactory, because there has been little opportunity for an analysis to be carried out of the impact of the provision across the key stage, or to influence the future direction of provision beyond the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They appreciate the care and support the school provides for their children. Inspection evidence supports these positive views. A minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about new procedures and question the impact these are having on the school's success. Inspection findings are that many of these anxieties stem from a lack of consultation and involvement of all stakeholders in the school's processes for self-evaluation. A small number of parents and carers also expressed concern about how the school deals with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that although pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall, the school's systems for recording and monitoring incidents of poor behaviour could be improved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brandon 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 117 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 357 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	57	43	37	4	3	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	69	59	45	38	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	48	51	44	7	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	52	48	41	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	55	46	39	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	44	57	49	4	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	44	61	52	2	2	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)	54	46	54	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	49	48	41	8	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	39	54	46	11	9	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	38	57	49	9	8	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	49	42	55	47	11	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	50	49	42	5	4	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 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 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brandon Primary School, Durham, DH7 8NL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Throughout our visit we were impressed by how keen you were to tell us all about your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons. Yours is a satisfactory school where you make satisfactory progress to reach standards similar to those of pupils in other schools. Most of you told inspectors that you like school, however, some of you do not attend as regularly as you should. This is one of the reasons why you do not make better progress in your work. Therefore, we have asked your school to take further action to help some of you to improve your attendance.

One of the strengths of your school is the way in which it helps you to understand and appreciate the people from backgrounds different from your own. This helps you to develop tolerance and to get along with each other well. You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and the actions which are important in order to follow a healthy lifestyle.

You tell us that you enjoy taking an active part in lessons, so we are encouraging your teachers to involve you more, provide you with more creative activities and to make sure the work is just at the right level for you. Your school is a new school and everybody wants the best for you and to make sure that you are well looked after. We also think it is important that the school involves you, all the staff and your parents and carers in deciding what the school does well and what changes are needed to help the school to improve. Therefore, we have asked those who lead and manage the school to find ways to help this to happen.

Thank you once again for your warm welcome. We enjoyed meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.