

Brook Field Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126283
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	328479
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	401
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Tong
Headteacher	Melanie Sancto
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 March 2006
School address	Cartwright Drive Swindon SN5 5SB
Telephone number	01793 874582
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brook Field is a large primary school situated in the west of Swindon. It serves a large private housing development. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language but very few are at an early stage of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. The children enter the school aged four into the two Early Years Foundation Stage classes.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The headteacher and her dedicated and committed team have successfully created a vibrant and nurturing learning environment in which excellent relationships have been developed. This has enabled pupils to reach high standards and make good progress as they move up through the school. The pupils feel healthy and safe, attendance is good and behaviour is outstanding. The pupils are eager to say how much they like the school and how they appreciate the excellent support they receive. Most parents fully support the school. 'My daughter has progressed well in the school's warm and friendly atmosphere' was a typical comment.

When they start school, most children have skills which are broadly in line with age related expectations. As a result of the good provision they receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils achieve above average standards by the time they enter Year 1. At the end of Year 2, standards are still above average and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are well above average, especially in reading. This demonstrates good progress throughout the school. The school is not complacent. It is able to demonstrate improved standards in writing, especially in Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, there are excellent displays that reflect high standards and show that pupils take great pride in their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few pupils for whom English is a second language make very good progress relative to their starting points.

Pupils achieve well as a result of the outstanding curricular provision they receive. The themes, topics, school visits and other activities are planned to be exciting, stimulating and engaging. Pupils commented on how much they enjoyed the lessons and activities. The quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes outstanding. Planning is meticulous and the use of assessments is effective, resulting in timely interventions for children in need of extra support. Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed very effectively throughout the school to support pupils' learning. There are inconsistencies in the level of challenge and rigour provided for more able pupils. The school has already identified the need to improve questioning techniques to ensure that higher attaining pupils are challenged appropriately. Academic guidance is rigorous and contributes effectively to pupils' good progress.

Good leadership and management ensure that the school runs smoothly and that there is a clear focus upon raising standards and achievement. Effective self-evaluation identifies the right priorities for improvement and provides clear direction for the school's development. The school sets challenging targets for each year group which reflect the school's high expectations for its pupils. However, the whole-school targets for improvement in the strategic action plan are not specific enough. This makes it difficult for senior leaders and governors to measure the impact of the actions taken to bring about the necessary improvement. Nevertheless, the actions taken to date, notably to raise standards in writing, clearly demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a positive and settled start to their school education in the Reception classes. The personal, social and emotional development and welfare of the children are outstanding. Parents are extremely pleased with the way the children are introduced to school life and the children are very well behaved and happy. They quickly grow in confidence and self-esteem as a consequence of the guidance they receive and the positive relationships they develop. One child stated that she 'loved everything in class', which included the stimulating and exciting 'Super Heroes' activities witnessed during the inspection. Children make good progress to reach standards that are above national age-related expectations by the time they enter Key Stage 1.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. Following recent staffing changes, the specialist teacher is ensuring that her considerable expertise is shared with colleagues to ensure consistently good provision between the two classes. Assessment strategies and methods to track children's progress are rigorously applied and all adults have a very good understanding of the needs of each child. The classroom and outside environments are well organised and stimulating. Effective deployment of other adults ensures that all children receive appropriate levels of guidance and support. There is careful planning of the curriculum that is both innovative and motivating. This ensures that all areas of learning are meaningfully integrated into daily activities. Children are happy to play together and show that they can share and be considerate. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and are emerging as readers and writers as a consequence of the stimulating curriculum they receive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the needs of higher attaining pupils are met more consistently across the school through suitably challenging tasks and teachers' questioning.
- Sharpen the key objectives in the school strategic action plan and ensure they include measurable outcomes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils achieve well. They make good progress from the start of the Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6. The school had identified writing as a relatively weaker area and has introduced strategies to improve pupils' skills. As a result, pupils are now making much better progress in writing, particularly in Year 1. In addition, the school identified the need to increase the numbers of pupils achieving the highest levels, particularly in mathematics and writing at Key Stage 1. Recent actions have had a good impact and the more able pupils are now reaching higher standards in Years 1 and 2. Good progress in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2. The standards achieved in reading are particularly high and a significant proportion of pupils achieve above average levels. Pupils' good achievement in writing is reflected in the many displays of high quality writing in classrooms and corridors.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' attitudes towards the school are extremely positive. It is clearly apparent that they enjoy attending Brook Field and they have developed very positive relationships with adults and with one another. Pupils behave extremely well and demonstrate a clear sense of pride and industry in all they do. They have an excellent knowledge of how to live healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Through the establishment of 'Eco' and 'Green' teams and the very effective support of the school council, the pupils have developed a keen sense of responsibility. Eco-friendly initiatives abound within the school, such as recycling, caring for the school grounds and water conservation. Throughout the school, pupils and parents participate in an early morning task as a start to the new school day. This often involves a shared problem-solving activity and acts as an excellent bridge between school and home. The social and moral development of the pupils is outstanding. They have a very well defined sense of right and wrong. Spiritual development in terms of an appreciation of colour, music and nature is good, although opportunities to reflect during daily acts of collective worship are less well developed. Cultural development, whilst good overall, is now being extended as the school establishes links with other urban schools and global partners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Across the school, there are many examples of good teaching and sometimes teaching is outstanding. The development of positive relationships, a range of interesting and exciting activities and attractive and well-organised classrooms are clear strengths. Consequently, the pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. A relative weakness in the overall quality of teaching is the inconsistent way the needs of higher attaining pupils are met. In the most effective lessons, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge, use challenging questions and vocabulary and ensure that a brisk pace is maintained. As a result, higher order thinking and creativity are actively encouraged for more able pupils. However, this is not yet consistent in every class. Suitable activities are planned to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and additional adults are deployed effectively to ensure that all pupils are very well supported. The marking of pupils' work and the tracking of progress are rigorous and, as a result, the teachers know the children very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

As well as meeting all requirements, the school's curriculum is very well planned and resourced and helps to prepare pupils well for their future lives. Teachers work very closely together to plan interesting and meaningful lessons and activities, inside and outside school, which actively engage all learners. Pupils commented upon how much they enjoyed the many experiences on offer. One pupil stated, 'we always know we have an enjoyable day ahead of us.' The provision for information and communication technology is fully integrated within the curriculum and this enhances learning. Very effective planning of cross-curricular themes and excellent displays of

artefacts in classrooms and corridors reflect the highest standards. The addition of numerous extra-curricular activities, theme days (such as the recent Safety Day), visits, visitors, the provision of French lessons and musical tuition clearly stimulate enjoyment, engagement and participation. 'Eco Warriors' and the 'Green Team' help to improve the school grounds and monitor birdlife in the area. In addition, an excellent programme of personal and social education greatly enriches the pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The provision of a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment lies at the heart of the school's work. The pastoral and physical care of the pupils is a significant strength of the school and all pupils thrive in this nurturing atmosphere of calm and thoughtfulness. Safeguarding arrangements are extremely robust and procedures are followed rigorously, especially in light of recent concerns aired by a small minority of parents regarding behaviour. Potential risks, such as the recent car parking difficulties, are carefully assessed and subsequent actions are skilfully undertaken and monitored. As a result, pupils are confident that adults look after them extremely well. Pupils' and parents' views are sympathetically listened to and immediately acted upon. Anti-bullying procedures have been highly successful in raising pupils' awareness and eradicating incidents. Well-established procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress lead to prompt and well-targeted actions to provide additional support. Pupils can clearly articulate their learning targets in literacy and numeracy and almost all pupils achieve their challenging targets. Very effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those pupils for who speak English as an additional language enables them to thrive and achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership has a very clear understanding of its strengths, weaknesses and priorities for improvement. At all levels, there is a clear focus upon raising standards and levels of achievement to ensure that all pupils make good progress and that high levels of attainment are maintained. This has resulted in the school's deservedly good reputation locally and in the very positive support from most of the parents. The school's accurate and robust self-evaluation process ensures that it has a clear educational direction. For example, it has recently taken steps to tackle weaknesses in writing, and is now able to demonstrate that these have accelerated pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. The strategic action plan successfully sets out the school's priorities but does not yet include measurable outcomes for each cohort that moves through the school. This makes it difficult for senior leaders to ensure that they are setting suitably challenging targets for more able pupils in order to improve their achievement. Subject and key stage leaders play an effective part in leading developments, for example through detailed action plans. Well-informed governors play a very active role in monitoring the quality of provision, particularly the curriculum. Excellent links with outside agencies support pupils' well-being and underpin the school's good contribution to community cohesion.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



14 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brook Field Primary School, Swindon SN5 5SB

Thank you for your warm welcome during our inspection of your school. We enjoyed our visit and we like the way you helped us. You are clearly proud of your school, you behave extremely well and you are very well supported by the adults. It is obvious that Brook Field is a happy and busy school where you are encouraged to succeed. Here are some of the highlights we found during our visit.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- The teachers work very hard to provide interesting lessons and activities. This helps you make good progress and reach standards that are well above average by the time you leave.
- Your behaviour and attitudes are outstanding, which helps you to learn and to develop positive relationships with one another and with the staff.
- The adults in the school look after you extremely carefully and they know you well, which helps you to feel safe.
- You clearly know how to eat healthily, lead healthy lifestyles and look after the environment.
- The classrooms and corridors are very attractively decorated with displays of your excellent writing and artwork.
- The school runs very smoothly and it is well led by the headteacher and governors, who, with the rest of the staff, make a very good team.

We have asked them to work on two things to make the school a better place.

- Make sure that those of you who are capable of reaching high standards are always given work that challenges you and makes you think for yourselves.
- Improve the way the school sets challenging targets to make improvements and checks whether it has achieved them.

You can help by continuing to work hard. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan
Lead inspector