

Brookburn Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105414
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	287222
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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 on roll	
School	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judith Summers
Headteacher	Miss Shalene Ferris
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001
School address	Brookburn Road Chorlton-cum-Hardy Manchester Lancashire M21 8EH
Telephone number	0161 8818880
Fax number	0161 8617960

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a suburb of south Manchester and also draws pupils from further afield. Most pupils are White British, about one third are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Their needs include learning and behavioural difficulties and physical disability. The school has achieved the ArtsMark, the Inclusion Mark (Gold) and the Healthy Schools Award (Bronze). The school is increasing from 1.5 to 2 forms of entry at the start of the next school year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is providing a good education for its pupils and making good progress during a period of significant uncertainty at headship level. This good achievement is the result of effective leadership and management by the acting headteacher who is ably supported by governors and a newly established senior leadership team. The strong support of parents, who while expressing much concern at the current difficulties are very appreciative of the work of the acting headteacher, is highly valued by the school. There is a shared sense of purpose among staff and a commitment to school development.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start thanks to good teaching in the Foundation Stage based on clear planning and the teachers' knowledge of how young children learn. All pupils, including those with additional needs, achieve well in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently above average and often significantly so. It is to the credit of all concerned that high standards have been maintained in recent years. The school has continued to add good value to pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy school and this is evident both in lessons and in the popularity of extra-curricular activities and the after-school club. Relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils are good. Levels of attendance are above average and punctuality is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and is characterised by an emphasis on practical activities and problem-solving as well as good opportunities for cooperative tasks. A further strength is the quality of teachers' marking, which provides encouragement and good guidance for improvement. The curriculum is good overall and is, in the main, suitably matched to the needs of the pupils, although on occasions the provision for gifted and talented pupils is not challenging enough to fully meet their needs. In the Foundation Stage, there is still scope for developing the opportunities for physical and imaginative play in the recently improved outdoor resources. The school provides good standards of care, guidance and support for pupils and has recently received a national award for the way it caters for all pupils, whatever their specific need. Systems to chart the progress of pupils and identify underachievement are good.

Leadership, management and governance of the school are good. Procedures to evaluate the performance of the school are effective and senior staff and governors have a keen awareness of how the school is doing and where improvements are necessary. Governors have been very active in the drive to remodel and refurbish the buildings and grounds, and this is a vital next step in the school's development, since its quality at the moment mitigates against the pride pupils have in their school and detracts from their enjoyment and comfort. The forthcoming increase in pupil numbers makes this even more urgent. The school works hard to keep parents informed about progress on this issue and that relating to the leadership of the school. Despite these difficulties, the school has maintained high standards since the last inspection report and has good capacity to improve. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Press ahead urgently with the plans to improve the learning environment for pupils.
- Improve the curriculum by making greater provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Make better use of the outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Nursery with above average levels of attainment. They make good progress so that by the end of the Reception year, the majority exceed the goals set for them.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. It is testament to the good management of the interim leadership team that an area of relative weakness, pupils' writing, was identified last year and that the school took effective steps to raise standards. As a result, in 2006, improvements in standards were evident in both Years 2 and 6, with more pupils reaching the higher levels in teacher assessments and national tests. Pupils often exceed the challenging targets set for them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few learning English as an additional language make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because of the good support they receive from teachers and other adults.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with strengths in their moral and social development. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a good awareness of each other's needs, evident in how they are friendly towards one another at playtimes. Pupils report that behaviour in school is generally good and their parents agree. Should any bullying arise, the pupils know what they must do and are confident that staff will help to resolve it well.

Pupils develop a good awareness of matters of personal safety and how to lead a fit and healthy lifestyle, which is a reflection of the school's commitment to promoting the pupils' health and well-being. They have a good opportunity to be part of decision-making through the school council and there are good systems of monitors, called 'Brookies', to help pupils at playtimes. The pupils have links with the community, for instance, hosting a Christmas party for local senior citizens and fundraising events. They are fully prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave the school. They display good teamwork and cooperative behaviour and this is often evident in lessons. They increasingly become independent and capable of researching their own work both in school and at home.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching results in the good achievement of pupils. In the Foundation Stage, provision is well planned to settle children into school routines and to build well on their achievements later in the Reception year. Characteristics of the good teaching are the relaxed relationships and the emphasis on opportunities for speaking through the use of open-ended questions. The strongest teaching has clear explanations, a brisk pace and provides plenty of challenge because tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. Occasionally, teaching is less motivating so pupils become restless and lose interest in the lesson, especially when the pace flags and then the rate of progress is much slower. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and play an important role in enhancing learning, for example, by supporting individual pupils. The

school has given appropriate attention to improving the appearance of pupils' work and this is paying dividends in better standards of handwriting and presentation.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has a good balance between tasks directed by teachers and those selected by children. The school has recently revamped the outdoor resources, providing an attractive range of new climbing apparatus and pathways for children to follow. At present, however, the range of activities is too narrow and there are missed opportunities for physical and imaginative play.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is well planned with due prominence given to the key skills of literacy and numeracy, which are often effectively woven into tasks in other subjects. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT), which was the key area for improvement at the last inspection, has improved and is now good. The school has the ArtsMark but has yet to tailor the curriculum to fully meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils or to add further variety and enrichment.

Good attention is paid to promoting personal development and the importance of a healthy lifestyle and citizenship. The curriculum is strengthened by a good range of additional activities, often benefiting from the expertise of outside specialists, and plenty of extra-curricular activities for all age groups that cater for a wide range of interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's commitment to supporting all pupils is evident in the achievement of the Inclusion Mark (Gold) Award. There is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties or other additional needs such as learning English as an additional language. The school has good links with agencies such as behaviour support workers, special schools and the service for promoting the achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic groups. These links help the pupils to achieve well. All procedures for child protection and the safe recruitment of staff are in place. The school attends to matters of health and safety satisfactorily, given the problems created by the deteriorating fabric of the school. The school has effective and manageable systems in place to monitor the achievements of pupils, track their progress and help to set further targets. Pupils have a very good awareness of their targets and what they need to do to achieve at a higher level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher has made good strides in not only managing the school on a daily basis but giving it a well focused sense of direction, aiming to achieve a school that caters for the needs of all and where expectations are being raised. The recently formed senior leadership team is developing well and supports the work of subject leaders effectively. Communication with parents is improving and they express their appreciation of this, especially during the recent period of uncertainty. A frequent comment has been that the acting headteacher, 'is doing a marvellous job' in difficult circumstances. Procedures to check and review the quality of the school's provision, introduced by the acting headteacher, are robust and are having a

positive impact on improving teaching, learning and achievement. As a result, the school's self-evaluation procedures are secure and its views fully reflect the judgements of the inspection team.

Governors are at the centre of strategic planning and fulfill their responsibilities well. They are well led by a skilled chairperson. Governors and senior staff have worked tirelessly to overcome difficulties in order to implement a comprehensive remodelling of the school. At the moment, as the school and the local authority acknowledge, many aspects of the buildings are unsatisfactory, such as parts of its fabric, the furnishings, toilet facilities and resources.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Annex A

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

Your school is giving you a good standard of education. This means that you are making good progress and these are some of the good features of your school:

- you are all achieving well and we were particularly pleased to see how much you have improved in writing
- your acting headteacher is doing a good job leading your school
- the staff take good care of you, helping you all to be fit, safe and healthy
- the staff give good support to anyone who finds learning hard and so you make good progress
- your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and you are growing into sensible students who work together well and who want to learn
- the staff provide you with good opportunities to enjoy activities after school.

To make the school even better, we want the governors and senior staff to press on urgently with plans to improve the buildings and grounds. We think you all deserve them!

We want your teachers to give the more able and talented among you more challenging work to do and we want staff in the Nursery and Reception classes to plan exciting opportunities for the children in the new outdoor play area.

Keep working hard.