

Brookhurst Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105018
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377161
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Tolley

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 of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Macauley
Headteacher	Elizabeth Davidson
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Tolley
Barbara Dutton

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed eight teachers and visited 15 lessons, seven of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other briefer visits to lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and also heard pupils reading. Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation, and the school's tracking of pupils' progress. The inspectors also analysed 77 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others completed by pupils and staff. The inspector looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but insufficient responses were available for any results to show.

Information about the school

Brookhurst is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The headteacher took up her post in September 2010. The school meets the current government floor standards. The school has Healthy Schools 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high and pupils’ achievement is good. Pupils enjoy reading and most read a variety of texts with fluency and understanding. The school is not outstanding because although teaching and learning are good and there are pockets of outstanding practice, there remain some minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and in particular, in some lessons opportunities are missed to increase pupils’ independence as learners and accelerate their progress.
- Teaching is good. The school provides effective support for those pupils who have special educational needs, tailored very closely to their needs. Teachers use themes imaginatively so that pupils are engaged and excited by activities. The emphasis on speaking and listening across the school effectively increases pupils' confidence and develops their problem-solving skills. Although assessment information is used effectively to plan the next steps in learning, it is not always used precisely enough in lessons, so that on occasions some pupils find work too easy.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils typically behave well in lessons and say that learning is fun. Attendance is high. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning, work very well with others and are courteous and polite. They say they feel safe in school.
- The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body monitor the school’s work closely and provide clear direction. Actions taken to address weaknesses identified at the last inspection have proved successful, providing a clear indication of the school’s good capacity to improve further. The monitoring and performance management by the senior leadership team have had a positive impact upon improving the quality of teaching and learning. Subject specialists provide good advice, support and training, but their role in leading and developing teaching in their subjects is not as fully developed as it could be.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' independence as learners and accelerate their progress further by:
 - improving the effectiveness of teachers' planning in providing further challenge, especially for the more-able pupils
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to take the initiative in lessons
 - involving pupils more in tracking and planning their own progress.
- Improving the quality of all teaching to that of the best by developing the role of subject leaders to share best practice across the school and to ensure that pupils deepen their understanding and hone their skills effectively as they move through the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle to learning quickly and happily. They are provided with a wide range of interesting and appealing activities which result in them gaining skills in many areas of learning and which are particularly effective in developing their communication skills and their independence as learners. Overall, they are considerate when sharing things and when 'taking turns' and are confident when asked to explain their views to others or to take the lead themselves in lessons. For example, in a numeracy lesson, children did simple addition and subtraction and explained how they had arrived at their answers in a variety of activities outside and then went on to set similar problems for each other.

Pupils thrive in lessons where they are challenged to achieve their best through working collaboratively with a partner or a small group to solve problems. Year 5 pupils worked enthusiastically in pairs to decide the precise instructions ancient Egyptians might give to an apprentice so that he could mummify a pharaoh. However, the pace of learning, especially for the more-able, slowed considerably because of time spent ensuring that all pupils had understood before beginning to write their instructions. The teaching of reading is effective in encouraging a love of literature and non-fiction. Pupils say they enjoy reading and most do so fluently and with understanding. Pupils' attainment in reading is high compared to that found nationally by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. They are able to identify literary devices used by authors and replicate these in their own writing. Year 6 pupils discussed what worked well in their writing with a partner and went on to illustrate their explanations to the class to show how personification and imagery could change the mood in a text. Pupils apply their mathematical skills effectively, especially when they are solving problems. Year 5 pupils worked in pairs to identify patterns in a list of numbers and continue a sequence and, as a result, they were very eager to share their conclusions with the rest of the class.

Most parents and carers feel that their children are progressing well at school. The inspection found that by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is high when compared with the national average and that they make good progress from their starting points as they move through the school. Swift identification of those pupils who have special educational needs is coupled with individual support tailored closely to their needs. This ensures that

these pupils also make good progress and are able to participate fully in whole-class activities alongside their classmates. In the past, some more-able pupils did not always achieve their full potential. The school has recognised this and is now working to close this performance gap.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers say that the teaching their children receive is good. Inspection findings indicate that teaching is good overall, but there remain some minor inconsistencies across the school. Imaginative, problem-solving activities engage and excite pupils' interest and enable them to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills in a variety of contexts, supporting their spiritual, moral and social development. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' thinking both in whole-class activities and in small group work. Pupils, including the youngest, are frequently asked to share and explain their thinking to others, which is effective in developing their speaking and listening skills, increasing their confidence and independence and developing their social skills.

Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan the next steps in learning but do not always plan in sharp enough detail for groups of differing ability within teaching groups. On occasions, more-able pupils are not always given the challenge they need to achieve their full potential. In the few instances where pupils lose interest or become restless, it is usually because they find the pace of learning too slow or are not always directly involved in whole-class activities. Marking is regular and usually gives good guidance about how to improve. Pupils know how they are getting on and what their next steps are to enable them to improve. They are frequently involved in evaluating their own and each other's work and make the best progress when they engage in a written dialogue with their teachers on how best to improve their work, but this practice is not always evident. The curriculum is used imaginatively to enable pupils to work collaboratively, respect the views of others and to explore other cultures, as well as to empathise with others and to appreciate literature, drama and music.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The pupils say that they feel safe in school, and parents and carers are confident that this is the case. Pupils have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside of school and know how to stay safe and healthy.

Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They say learning is fun and they are enthusiastic about their learning and their reading. They have very good relationships with each other and with adults in the school and are courteous and polite. Incidences of bullying and exclusions are rare and parents, carers and pupils are confident that the school deals with such occurrences promptly and effectively.

Pupils display high levels of concentration and, when working in groups, organise themselves quickly and without fuss. They take responsibilities seriously and are proud of their achievements, for instance, as school councillors, members of the 'Green Team', as house captains and buddies for younger pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, strongly supported by the senior leadership team, provides very clear educational direction, based firmly on a rigorous analysis of pupils' progress, close monitoring and an accurate evaluation of the school's work. In the relatively short time the headteacher has been in post, she has won the confidence of pupils, parents and carers and staff alike. Members of the governing body play an active part in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching, including opportunities for professional development through the local network of schools and the improved use of assessment information, are proving successful in accelerating progress. Leaders, staff and the governing body are committed to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and take advantage of what the school offers. Discrimination is tackled robustly. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Policies are regularly reviewed by the governing body, and staff kept up to date with training.

Subject specialists use their expertise to good effect in planning the curriculum and to monitor the progress that pupils are making, but they are not yet directly involved in evaluating the impact of this in lessons or in improving the quality and consistency of teaching in their subjects. As a result, leaders currently do not make the most of the pockets of outstanding practice across the school to inspire others. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, including those who have special educational needs. The focus on speaking and listening across the school, together with the development of an imaginative curriculum, has had a positive impact upon pupils' enthusiasm for learning, and contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A good range of activities, including drama, musical and sporting activities, as well as a wide range of clubs, broaden pupils' experience significantly. Visits, including a residential visit to Wales, as well as opportunities to work with artists, are all greatly valued by pupils. High standards have been maintained and issues from the previous report have been tackled successfully. These are clear indications that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookhurst Primary School, Wirral CH63 0EH

I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to some of you read. You told us how much you enjoy your learning and how proud you are of your school. We agree with you: you go to a good school. It's an exciting place to learn with lots of things to do. We were very impressed by your good behaviour, the way you get on with each other and adults in your school. We think that you all make a really important contribution to your school through the school council, the Green Team and as house captains and buddies for younger pupils.

Younger children make good progress in the Reception classes and you make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Your attainment is high in English and mathematics. Your teachers work very hard and their teaching is good. We were particularly impressed by how well you read and you told us how much you enjoy your reading. We did notice that on occasions in lessons some of you find work too easy so we have asked the teachers to make sure you are always given the right amount of challenge so you can always achieve your best. We also noticed how well you got on when you worked together to solve problems but that sometimes you had to wait too long before you could start the tasks set. We have asked the teachers to put this right. We have also asked the teachers to continue to work together to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best. You told us that the staff look after you very well and we agree. The headteacher and staff are working very hard to make your school even better. You can help by continuing to work hard. We wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley
Lead inspector

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