

# Brooke School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125801
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359945
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mick Megee

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	156
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Val Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sheila Cowen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Overslade Lane Rugby CV22 6DY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01788 812324
<b>Fax number</b>	01788 522866
<b>Email address</b>	admin7023@we-learn.com

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 lessons and saw 16 teachers. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, parents and carers, and with representatives of the governing body. Inspectors also took into account the questionnaire responses of 43 parents and carers, 44 pupils and 27 staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including development planning, pupils' performance data and records of risk assessments.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

It looked at how well different groups of pupils enjoy and achieve in lessons.

- It considered how effectively teachers, especially at Key Stage 3, use assessment information to set challenging targets and plan lessons.
- It examined the quality of curriculum planning and support given to pupils to see if these enable them to achieve the best they can and prepare them well for the future.
- It looked at how well the current leadership team is increasing the school's capacity to improve through tracking progress, identifying underachievement and taking robust remedial action.

## Information about the school

The school is of above average size for a special school and provides for pupils with a statement of special educational needs for moderate or severe learning difficulties. A minority of them have additional difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders, physical disability, specific learning difficulties or complex and profound needs. The school runs a nursery, with 12 children under the age of three, which acts as an assessment unit. Almost all pupils are White British, with a very small minority from other ethnic heritages. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. A small minority of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The senior leadership team was reorganised in September 2010, with two assistant headteachers who are currently acting as deputy headteachers.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Brooke School is a good school. It provides a happy environment and continues to improve its outcomes for pupils. Teaching is of good quality and brings about good academic and personal achievement. Members of the senior leadership team, most of whom are newly appointed, share responsibility well for the work of the school. They have brought increased enthusiasm and a strong commitment to self-development among the staff. Staff are benefitting from the improved assessment information that has increased the school's capability for accurate and thorough self-evaluation. The governing body carries out its responsibilities effectively and provides robust challenge and advice to the school. All these factors support well the school's good capacity to continue improving. Pupils benefit from excellent care, guidance and support, including safeguarding.

Staff respond very well to the needs of pupils, particularly those who require a high level of personal care, managing them in a way that is always respectful of their need for dignity. There are good relationships with other agencies to provide medical, therapeutic and educational support to meet the needs of all the pupils. There is an exceptionally strong partnership with parents, who greatly value the contribution and sensitive support they receive from staff. As one parent said, 'I wish my other children's schools were as engaged and understood their pupils in the same way as the teachers at Brooke School.'

Children joining the school below the age of five make exceptionally good progress and benefit from the staff's welcoming, sympathetic and skilful approach in the excellently-managed Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make good progress through to post-16, although this progress slows somewhat in Key Stages 2 and 3, where the management of teaching, though satisfactory, is not as skilful as elsewhere. In a few lessons, teachers do not yet use assessment information sufficiently well to match learning to the needs and capabilities of all the pupils and teaching assistants are not sufficiently well briefed to provide all the required support. Most teachers make good use of visual cues to make their meanings clear and to aid communication. In a few lessons, however, staff forget to do this and this hampers progress for pupils, especially those who rely heavily on these cues for their understanding. Nevertheless, pupils generally achieve well in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education, and those in Key Stage 4 and at post-16 make good progress so that they go on to productive social, academic or vocational programmes. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe. They have very good opportunities to undertake frequent, regular, intensive physical exercise, which helps them make healthy lifestyle choices and keep fit. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school, because of the good and interesting range of subjects they are offered as well as the warm welcome they receive. There are good opportunities for pupils to attend mainstream schools in order to further develop their social and academic skills.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stages 2 and 3, so that all lessons are at least good or better by July 2011, by:
  - ensuring that teachers make full use of assessment information when planning lessons
  - ensuring that activities are always well matched to the needs and capabilities of all the pupils
  - raising expectations among middle managers and teachers of the levels pupils can reach
  - ensuring that all teaching assistants are well briefed so that they promote learning as effectively as possible.
- Improve the quality of communication between staff and pupils by:
  - auditing the quality of additional communication cues, such as signs, symbols and objects of reference, in each class
  - providing training for staff on the importance of additional cues for all pupils and especially for those who have difficulties in understanding spoken language
  - undertaking regular monitoring visits to ensure that good standards of communication are maintained.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and by the end of their schooling most gain entry level or other more basic qualifications such as Transition Challenge. The school's data and scrutiny of pupils' work show that overall pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress in art and physical education is exceptionally good throughout the school, because of good specialist teaching. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress from their starting points, because of highly skilled teaching and excellent management. Progress in Key Stages 2 and 3 is satisfactory rather than good, as a result of less effective teaching at those stages. Pupils' enjoyment of learning was evident in the lessons seen during the inspection and in their discussions with the inspectors. There are very positive relationships within the classroom and staff constantly give encouragement and realistic feedback. Pupils behave well in lessons, work hard and want to do well. In those few lessons where teachers set undemanding activities or the pace is slow, pupils show maturity and do not reveal their irritation or react badly. Pupils who have additional difficulties such as health or physical problems, receive gentle and sensitive support in lessons so that they make the same overall good progress as others. There is little discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils with different categories of need, of different ethnic heritages or with different home languages.

Pupils feel happy, exceptionally safe and well cared for. This was confirmed by parents and carers, and by pupils in discussions. As a result, there are relaxed and friendly relationships throughout the school, and this has a very positive influence on the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils develop a very strong commitment to staying healthy and keeping fit as demonstrated by the very high take-up of extra-curricular sports, such as cross-

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country running and the dance club. Older pupils are very aware of the dangers of smoking and drugs.

Within the school, pupils gladly take on responsibilities, such as being on the school council, and older pupils keep a close lookout for younger children. Pupils reach out into the local community mainly through one-off events, such as fund-raising. The pupils' good progress in basic skills, their sound attendance and developing experience of working life in Key Stage 4 and post-16, through appropriate placements with employers, mean they are well prepared for leaving school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, and reflected in the positive atmosphere apparent throughout the school. There are some good examples of strong cultural development, for instance through taking part in a production of 'The Magnificat' with a local secondary school. However, pupils' understanding of multi-cultural communities and of different lifestyles is less well developed, The school has already recognised this and has an action plan in place to address this.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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## How effective is the provision?

Classrooms are happy places where pupils enjoy well-organised lessons taught at a suitably brisk pace. Relationships between staff and pupils are entirely positive. Good assessment information is collected frequently and, for the most part, teachers use the information well to plan effectively and adapt carefully the activities so that they suit each pupil. Teaching assistants frequently give sensitive and effective personal support. Because of this, the pupils feel confident to learn new things. In Key Stages 2 and 3, however, the quality of planning is not so consistent. Here, staff are not always used to their best advantage and learning activities are not always skilfully designed to maximise everyone's learning.

The curriculum provides a broad and balanced experience that reflects the individual needs of pupils and ensures a firm focus on developing personal and practical skills. Staff make use of a wide range of strategies to meet the identified learning needs of pupils. These support pupils' basic skills and language acquisition effectively, as well as helping them to develop their understanding of good behaviour and social interaction. There is some inconsistency in the way in which pupils' communication and understanding are encouraged by the use of additional visual cues, such as signs and gestures. The school enhances the curriculum well, for example by arranging visits from local artists and musicians and drama specialists as well as through the work of speech and language and occupational therapists. Pupils are offered a good range of educational visits, including residential experiences, throughout their time in school. These experiences increase their social and cultural understanding and boost their self-confidence in real-life situations. The school's good partnerships with other schools, including dual registration where appropriate, enable many pupils to gain social and academic experience by regularly attending lessons in mainstream classes.

The school provides a very welcoming and supportive environment for pupils and their families. Pupils place great trust in all the adults who care for them. The school does everything it can to enable parents to support their children at home through daily diaries, workshops and frequent meetings. There are excellent working partnerships with external agencies, including social services and health professionals. Attendance is very well monitored and the procedures to promote and improve attendance have resulted in year-on-year improvement. Transition arrangements are very good at all stages, including post-16. When students get ready to leave the school, they receive very good careers advice and the school ensures that every student moves on to a productive future.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

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## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has successfully developed a senior leadership team whose members all share the same ambitious aspirations for improving the school's effectiveness. This team has established good systems to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning and the school development plan shows clearly how the school aims to improve further. These developments have been backed up by good opportunities for professional development and training for staff. Although change has been predominantly led by the headteacher and the senior leadership team, leaders at every level are emerging as an increasingly strong force for improvement. At Key Stage 2 and 3, middle managers have not yet brought about change as rapidly as elsewhere in the school, and an action plan is in place to further develop these managers' skills. The governing body provides well-focused challenge and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding, with exceptionally well-developed systems in place to minimise risk and very close involvement of key agencies. Clear policies and procedures are made known through regular and repeated training. The governing body play its part in ensuring that safeguarding is given a high priority, with the nominated governor making regular visits to the school. The school works extremely effectively with a range of partners to guide pupils and support their families. Innovative activities are offered to parents to encourage their participation, such as the 'Let's get cooking' workshop involving fathers and their children cooking healthy meals.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well and is effective in minimising any variations in outcomes due to pupils' differing levels of need or background. Much has been done to ensure that all pupils are included in activities and no form of discrimination is evident. Community cohesion is satisfactorily promoted through an audit and through activities such as participation in national events in rowing and cheerleading. However, plans to increase pupils' understanding and experience of those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds have not yet been fully implemented.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Provision in the nursery for children under three is exceptionally strong and meets all requirements. These children benefit from the excellent provision and leadership, settling in easily and happily. Their individual needs are assessed quickly and accurately so that they make very rapid strides in learning and social development. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children make very fast progress in all areas of learning. They greatly enjoy the many activities which are provided both in and out of the classroom. Staff have established very effective routines for dealing with the mix of learning, therapeutic and medical needs and children are constantly given opportunities to be as independent as possible while feeling safe in and around the school. Children form strong relationships with all the adults. They enjoy being with other children and display an awareness of one another's differences and similarities from an early age. They benefit greatly from the skilful, close attention paid to their physical, as well as their educational, needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage area of the school provides a rich and stimulating environment and excellent use is made of resources. Children are given very good individual support so that they are able to benefit from the many activities provided, often incorporating themes such as 'Snow and Ice'. Staff plan diligently so that activities are completely tailored to the needs of each child, based on scrupulous observations of progress. Parents and carers are fully informed of the progress their children make, and are given constant encouragement and guidance as to how to support their children's learning at home. Children and their families greatly benefit from the outstanding leadership and management of this stage.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Sixth form

The achievement of students at post-16 is good, brought about by effective provision, leadership and management. There are good transition arrangements for students as they move up from the main school. Staff provide them with good support so that they develop increasingly sensible attitudes and a mature approach to their work. The good development of students' social skills is evident in their contributions to the school council, which one sixth-former chairs and where others act as good role models for younger pupils.

Staff make good use of accredited programmes and experiences of work-related learning to extend and evidence students' achievements. In this way, students develop the key skills for life which they will need in their next phase of education, training or residential provision. Students enjoy good curricular opportunities which enable them to develop practical skills, such as painting the benches in the primary playground. Teaching is effective and support staff are proactive, stepping in as necessary to encourage, involve or divert students.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

The comments made by parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire reflected the very high level of satisfaction they feel and their appreciation of the support that the school offers both them and their children. The response rate was just below the average for special schools nationally. The very large majority of these parents and carers echoed the view formed by inspectors, through meeting with parents and carers, and through examining the school's extensive survey evidence. Their views are that this is a school which has established an excellent rapport and very strong partnership with parents or carers and successfully provides constant and effective support. The following comments

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represent the views of many: 'a very approachable and fantastic school'; 'they deal with any problems or concerns very quickly and effectively'; and 'the school has really bought my daughter on, with all the support they give.'

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brooke 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 153 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	72	9	21	2	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	29	67	12	28	2	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	47	23	53	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	51	19	44	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	56	15	35	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	44	20	47	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	53	19	44	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)	22	51	13	30	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	56	15	35	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	44	19	44	2	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	53	16	37	3	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	30	70	10	23	2	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	72	10	23	2	5	0	0

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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Brooke School, Rugby, CV22 6DY**

We enjoyed our visit to your school very much. Thank you for helping us to find out about your school. It was a real pleasure to meet so many of you and to see how well you are doing. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found.

Brooke School is a good school which helps you to make good progress in your learning. The youngest children and the oldest pupils and students make the most progress. You like coming to school. You feel safe and are very well cared for, and the staff teach you well. This helps you to grow into sensible and mature young people. You do some interesting things in and out of school, such as the rowing and the cheerleading. We enjoyed looking at the pictures and photographs of the things that you have done and the records of what you have achieved.

Those who run the school, like your headteacher, do a good job. They and all the staff work hard to help you. It is important that everyone who works with you helps you to make as much progress as you can. I have asked your headteacher and the staff to make sure that you each have everything you need to learn at exactly the right level. This will help you to learn faster and gain even more certificates. Many of you use symbols and signing and I have asked all the staff to make sure that they do too.

Perhaps you can help by letting staff know if the work is too easy, or too hard, and to practise using your signs and symbols with your friends.

I am sure that you will all try your best and I wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mick Megee

Lead Inspector

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