

Broad Oak Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114390
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	365629
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Holland
Headteacher	Maria Maslin
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, observed five teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils, as well as talking with pupils in lessons. The inspectors also held discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, development planning, minutes of governing body visits and pupils' work. Inspectors scrutinised the 67 questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as others from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- The extent to which improved planning and teaching methods are being used to increase the level of challenge in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The degree to which developments to the curriculum, including the sharing of resources with the federated school, are accommodating the needs of all pupils including those who join at other than the usual time.
- The extent to which the federation has increased the effectiveness of leadership in influencing the school's direction and performance. The extent to which the federation has increased the effectiveness of leadership in influencing the school's direction and performance.

Information about the school

Broad Oak is smaller than most other primary schools. The very large majority of pupils are from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into a Reception class. The school has won a number of awards reflecting its commitment to healthy living and eco-awareness.

Broad Oak federated with a local primary school in January 2008. Known as the Woodlands Federation, the two schools share the headteacher, several staff and the governing body.

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

Broad Oak is a good school and it serves its community well. It has several outstanding features. These include safeguarding arrangements and the care and support that pay particular attention to enhancing pupils' self-esteem and to raising achievement. The impact of these positive features is reflected in pupils' personal qualities, including their interest in what they do, their awareness and sensitivity of the environment, and enjoyment of learning. Pupils behave exceptionally well and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and one parent, expressing a typical view, commented that 'I think that the beauty of the school is the staff...they always have time for the children and parents. In turn, the children are happy...and they learn, not only academically, but also to be confident and caring.'

The effectiveness of the federation has had a positive influence on several aspects of the school's work. It includes the development of leadership skills, the broadening of management responsibilities, and the strengthening of teachers' subject knowledge. These aspects have helped to underpin recent improvements to pupils' achievement levels. The tenacity and resolve of the headteacher, along with strengths in collective leadership, are key factors driving improvement. Systematic monitoring and tracking systems have been established. The school's awareness and vision are informed well by effective self-evaluation procedures. The governing body and school leaders have a clear understanding of where the school is now and of the priorities that need to be addressed to maintain recent improvements. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The drive to lift achievement levels is supported by a review of the curriculum and a systematic monitoring of classroom practice. Accurate assessment procedures support successful teaching, which engages pupils fully and motivates them with interesting activities that are often linked to their everyday experiences. Pupils are progressing well in lessons that are usually pitched at the right level. However, the school knows pupils are not challenged consistently throughout all lessons, particularly when introductions are too lengthy and activities at the start of lessons are too pedestrian. Achievement is good and pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to match the above-average attainment levels reached last year. Intervention work, including closely targeted support for individual pupils, is successfully supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' personal outcomes are reflected in their maturity, enthusiasm and involvement in the many activities that support the smooth running of the school. Pupils are exceptionally courteous and show respect for others while supporting younger pupils, for example. Extremely popular clubs, after-school activities and residential trips provide pupils with many opportunities to refine their creative and performance skills and develop confidence.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by reducing the length of the introductions and giving pupils more challenging activities from the start of lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is reflected in their eagerness to become fully involved in well-paced activities in English, mathematics and physical education.

Pupils worked well independently of the teacher, for example, while reflecting on their senses and generating descriptive words for a poem about a rainforest. Pupils could not wait to use drama to help explore the feelings of different characters they had read about during a previous English lesson. In mathematics, pupils were elated when they found different patterns while working with consecutive numbers. In swimming, pupils were fully involved and keen to complete all the challenging tasks. In art, pupils discovered for themselves how combinations of coloured paints produced different shades of blue. However, pupils make less progress in lessons when teaching is not so stimulating and less engaging.

Children join the school with attainment that is broadly as expected across the areas of learning. Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and school data show that levels of attainment and the rate of progress are improving rapidly and securely, particularly in mathematics. Pupils, especially those who attend Broad Oak throughout their primary school years, achieve well. Those pupils who join at other than the usual time make good progress in a short time.

Pupils say they like coming to school because teachers explain things clearly, learning is interesting and the activities are fun. They feel very safe in school. They show considerable interest in local community projects and in fundraising activities. Pupils find the school's eco-friendly garden an exciting place in which to learn about plants while gaining the confidence to try growing vegetables at home. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual time say that they are made to feel welcome and make friends quickly. Pupils' excellent understanding of living healthily is evident in the way they talk confidently about the importance of eating different kinds of food and drinking fluids and changes to the body during exercise. That understanding is recognised in the school's national award. The school council provides very good opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others, develop wider skills regarding economic well-being, and to make decisions regarding small items of games equipment at break time, for example.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Strong relationships and well-paced activities underpin teaching. Questioning often gives pupils opportunities to think about their work and probe their understanding. Topics, such as those that relate activities to everyday experiences and encourage creative writing, grab pupils' interest successfully and keep their attention. However, on occasion, introductions are long and some activities do not always expect enough from pupils early enough in the lesson. The federation has increased the opportunities for professional development and the positive impact is evident in the teaching of mathematics, which has led to pupils making more rapid gains in learning than previously. Assessment is used well to guide planning. Marking is supportive and usually explains how pupils can improve their work. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning and increase opportunities for independent research.

The school is striving to develop a curriculum that offers a balance between basic skills in English and mathematics and the enhancement of pupils' skills of enquiry. Recent changes, which include a greater focus on mental mathematics and topics that interest boys, are having a positive influence on progress, especially at Key Stage 2. The curriculum is underpinned by an effective programme for personal, social and health education. The teaching of French and Spanish adds a further positive dimension. Attractive and stimulating displays, reflecting the school's centenary, give an insight into the range of pupils' learning experiences. Planning, which links different subjects such as

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art and history, gives pupils opportunities to reinforce their learning and develop their skills through topics. Those pupils who join at other than the usual time respond well to the practical tasks and interesting topics. The federation has proved effective in developing themes jointly, including 'One World Week', which is recognised in the school's nationally recognised award. Pupils' learning experiences are enriched also by a wide range of very popular clubs, sports activities, residential trips, and visits to places of local interest.

The excellent support for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is recognised by parents and carers. One parent's comments sum up the views of others; 'This school and all its staff have levels of care and attention far beyond any other school I have come across. They treat each child as an individual in their own right.' Attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected not just in the wide range of opportunities for physical activity, but also in its healthy school meals. A number of strategies have been introduced, which have proven to be highly effective in refining individualised programmes of support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement. For example, the federation has helped with the retention of a key member of staff to strengthen support for individual pupils and strengthen contacts with parents and carers and outside agencies. As a result, pupils with the greatest needs gain confidence, develop their self-esteem and make good, and sometimes better, progress. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual time are extremely well supported and settle well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are increasingly embedding ambition and driving improvement. The federation has provided the catalyst for key staff to try new ideas and take wider responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. These include shared subject leadership, management of assessment procedures and curriculum development. With support from dedicated staff, the leadership team has developed a school that is committed to strengthening each pupil's self-esteem and to raising achievement. Systematic monitoring has led to a greater consistency in teaching and, consequently, to more rapid progress in lessons than in the past. The promotion of equality and approaches to tackling any form of discrimination are good. The school's analysis of data is helping staff to identify the needs of individual pupils at an early stage. As a result, groups of pupils make similar progress, although some pupils could make faster progress in some classes.

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The governing body is supportive of the school. It has developed a systematic approach to monitoring, which is used effectively. The governing body is involved closely in the work of the school, although information it gains from monitoring is not always used systematically to guide school improvement. However, the school has a good awareness of what it needs to do next to sustain the progress it has made already.

Attention to pupils' safety and safeguarding is outstanding and embedded in the school's work. High-quality assurance and detailed risk assessment systems have been established across the two schools. Extremely well-organised procedures ensure that safeguarding arrangements are followed carefully. The school has clear management responsibilities to ensure pupils are safe and the governing body monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its policies and practices rigorously. Local services and agencies are used exceptionally well to enhance the well-being of pupils experiencing difficult circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school demonstrates an extremely good understanding of the community it serves. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to gain a deep understanding of people's backgrounds within the local communities, including those at the other federated school, and a good awareness nationally and internationally. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and play a very active part in school events, including fundraising projects, school celebrations and performances. Consultation meetings and involvement in the planning of themed weeks strengthen parents' and carers' ties with the school and help them to understand their children's different learning experiences.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

In keeping with the rest of the school, attention to the welfare and safety of children is exemplary. Close links have been established with pre-school centres and parents and carers. Committed staff have successfully established a calm and welcoming environment in which children are nurtured from the beginning. As a result, the children settle quickly and are eager to learn. Children make good progress, especially in speech and language skills, where attainment is initially weaker than other areas of learning. Children learn to work independently at an early stage and develop a good understanding of how to keep safe. Well-planned themed topics take good account of children's starting points and interests. Children listen well and chatter enthusiastically about their work. They move readily from one activity to another, making effective use of the stimulating indoor and outdoor areas. The areas provide an attractive and well-organised learning environment that develops children's confidence and promotes independent learning. All children benefit from swimming lessons and access to their Foundation-Stage garden.

The provision is well managed and procedures ensure that staff have accurate and reliable information about children's progress. However, assessments are over-reliant on the outcomes from teacher-directed activities. Links with the federated school have helped with planning and in moderating children's work. Adults, working cohesively as a team, move seamlessly in and out of activities, responding to individuals or taking part in larger group activities. Adults give closely targeted support to activities directed by the teacher, as well as others which children choose for themselves. The school recognises that parents and carers are not involved sufficiently in their children's learning by contributing, for example, to their assessments and profiles.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An above-average proportion of the parents and carers returned the questionnaires. All but a very few of the responses expressed positive views about the school's work. A number of parents and carers made written comments and the large majority of these expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. They included complimentary remarks about the welcoming, caring and supportive community, the quality of the staff, and the broad range of learning experiences. However, a very few questionnaires recorded reservations over a small number of issues. They included the amount of progress their children are making. The inspection team looked at this during the course of the inspection. It judged that improvements to the curriculum and assessment procedures were leading to pupils making quicker progress than previously.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Broad Oak Community 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 138 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	72	19	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	69	19	28	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	60	23	34	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	63	23	34	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	69	19	28	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	55	29	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	67	22	33	0	0	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)	46	69	18	27	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	67	20	30	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	55	27	40	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	58	23	34	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	70	18	27	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	73	18	27	0	0	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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"> ■ 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 pupils' 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.



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broad Oak Community Primary School, Heathfield TN21 8UD

Thank you for being so welcoming when we inspected your school. It was clear that you were excited and very much involved in the large number of activities that were planned to celebrate the school's centenary. We hope that the weather was kind to you! Thanks also to those of you who completed questionnaires to say what you thought of your school.

This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you.

We were impressed by your exemplary behaviour and the enthusiasm that you showed in lessons and during extra-curricular activities, such as gardening club. It was clear from talking to you that you enjoy school, feel very safe, and benefit from outstanding care and support. You told us it is also a place where you want to be, attend regularly, make friends, enjoy learning, and are eager to take part in the many interesting clubs and exciting activities. All but a very few of your parents and carers expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. A number wrote some glowing comments about the school.

Here are some other important things about your school.

- You make good progress in lessons and the quality of your work is above that found in most other schools.
- You respond enthusiastically to school activities and interesting lessons.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the smooth running of the school and contribute very successfully to local activities.
- You have an excellent understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

To make things even better, we have asked the headteacher and staff to ensure that introductions in lessons are not quite so long and activities always challenge you.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now. You can all help the school by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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