

Broadlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116679
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	379284
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	Graham Sims

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 of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Lake
Headteacher	Lindsey Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2010
School address	Prospect Walk Tupsley Hereford HR1 1NZ
Telephone number	01432 266772
Fax number	01432 263409
Email address	admin@broadlands.hereford.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Graham Sims

Additional Inspector

Kathryn Skan

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 18 lessons taken by seven different teachers and visited each class which was present during the inspection. (Two teachers and most pupils from the three classes for Years 5 and 6 were absent during the inspection as they were on a residential visit.) Some lesson observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at their written work. They held discussions with the headteacher, groups of pupils, three members of the governing body, nearly all of the teaching staff and some teaching assistants. They had informal discussions with a few parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's attendance data, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, assessment data, planning, safeguarding procedures and other documentation. They scrutinised questionnaires completed by 36 parents and carers, 26 pupils and 12 staff.

Information about the school

Broadlands Primary School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has halved over the last seven years but is starting to increase once more. Most children now start the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery class, where there is full-time provision on three days a week and mornings-only provision on two days. There are two classes for pupils in Year 6. The number of pupils in most year groups is well below the school's admissions number of 30. The large majority of pupils are White British. Around a tenth come from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Most of these are from Eastern European countries and speak English as an additional language. A few of these pupils speak little or no English when they join the school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. In 2011, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress for pupils at the end of Year 6.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Broadlands Primary School is a satisfactory school which is improving. It is not good because there is still some variation in the quality of the teaching, pupils' attainment in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics, and staff are not always pulling in the same direction. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- After a number of years in which pupils in Key Stage 2 have made insufficient progress and attainment has been below average, the school's determined efforts to manage staff performance and improve the quality of teaching are bearing fruit. Pupils have made up lost ground and now achieve satisfactorily. Standards are now broadly average at the end of Year 6.
- Good professional development and regular monitoring have ensured that the teaching in many classes is now good. In a few classes, there is not always enough challenge for or engagement of pupils of differing abilities. Curricular planning in some classes is creative; in others it is less imaginative. Writing skills are developed well in English lessons, but are not consolidated sufficiently through written work in other subjects or through rigorous marking.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A few pupils let the side down and there is not always a consistent approach to managing their behaviour. The below average attendance of past years has improved significantly; attendance is now above average.
- The school's leaders and governing body have worked very hard to deal with major financial difficulties and unsettling staffing situations over the last few years and have brought stability and clearer direction to the school. However, staff at all levels are not always united in their approach or consistent in following procedures.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to enable pupils of all abilities to achieve well by July 2013, improve the quality of teaching where it is currently satisfactory by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and ensuring that the more-able pupils are always given sufficiently challenging work
 - ensuring greater rigour in the questioning of pupils and the level of work which is deemed acceptable
 - reducing the number of worksheets used and encouraging pupils to become more independent in the way they tackle and set out their work
 - adopting a more creative approach to curricular planning which engages and motivates the pupils.

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - making active use of opportunities for pupils to write in subjects across the curriculum to develop and consolidate their skills
 - paying greater attention to quality rather than quantity and ensuring that pupils have sufficient time to develop, amend and revise their writing
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work is rigorous in picking up areas for improvement and that the marking dialogue between staff and pupils is developmental rather than superficial.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all staff work together as a united team which agrees on and follows consistently the school's policies and procedures, particularly with regard to the management of pupils' behaviour
 - improving communication between staff and the school's leadership.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they start school vary from year to year but are generally below the level expected. In some years, children's communication, personal and social skills have been very low. The school's data show that progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved markedly over the last two years, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The emphasis on phonics (the links between letters and sounds) has enabled children to make exceptionally good progress in learning to read this year. As a result, children now enter Year 1 at or very close to the expected level. This has not always been the case in the past.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 and good progress in Year 2, where

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pupils' learning in the classroom is affected positively by the teacher's high expectations, fast pace and rigorous questioning. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are eager to please, and strive to produce work of good quality. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 have been broadly average for the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics, representing good progress from their starting points.

For the three years to the end of 2011, standards have been below average at the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils' progress has been inadequate. The situation has improved markedly as inadequate teaching has been eradicated and, in most classes, pupils are now making good progress in lessons enabling them to make up previously lost ground. Pupils' attainment is now at or close to the levels expected for their ages in most classes. While there are still a few pupils who have not progressed as well as they should, standards at the end of Year 6 are now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, and more pupils are reaching the higher Level 5 than in the past. Pupils' writing skills still lag behind their reading skills, where intervention work has ensured that almost all pupils are reading at the level expected for their age. Much of Key Stage 2 were absent during the inspection, but work in pupils' books shows that most pupils are applying themselves well to their learning and trying hard to improve.

The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs mirrors closely that of their peers. There has been too big a gap between these pupils' attainment and that of all pupils nationally in the past, but the gap is closing as the quality of teaching is improving. Pupils who join the school speaking little or no English receive good individual support and make good progress in learning English.

Quality of teaching

The overall impact of teaching over time on pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, staff changes and strenuous efforts to improve have resulted in much stronger teaching throughout the school than has been the case in the past. The teaching in many of the lessons observed during the inspection was good. Thorough planning takes into consideration the differing needs of the more-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The latter receive good support from both teachers and teaching assistants. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and employ a good variety of teaching strategies. The frequent use of talking partners and working in groups helps pupils to develop their social skills well. Questioning is often rigorous, which helps pupils to think more deeply about their work. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good balance between activities which children choose themselves and those led by an adult. The effective teaching of phonics is continued in Years 1 and 2.

In some lessons, the teaching is less effective because expectations of what pupils as a class, or particular groups of pupils, are capable of achieving are not high enough.

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In one lesson, for example, the more-able pupils were asked to complete subtractions which they were already well capable of doing. Although they were provided with some extension work later in the lesson, they made less progress than the pupils with special educational needs who were fully engaged by the teaching assistant using a good range of resources to help them develop their understanding of subtraction. In some lessons, teachers accept pupils' answers too readily and miss opportunities to extend pupils' thinking by asking more penetrating questions.

Writing skills are developing more securely than in the past. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils are kept busily engaged throughout the year but, in too many written tasks, the teacher provides pupils with unnecessary structures or sheets which restrict what they write or the way they set out their work. In some cases, pupils are given unchallenging worksheets. As a result, not enough opportunity is given for pupils to tackle all aspects of their work independently. In some classes, not enough time is spent developing substantial pieces of writing or giving pupils the opportunity to revise, amend and improve their writing. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but teachers are not always rigorous enough in pointing out mistakes or challenging pupils to improve elements of their work. They follow the school's policy of engaging pupils in written dialogue, but this is often very superficial.

Although representing only a fifth of the school population, a large majority of responses to questionnaires show that pupils, parents and carers feel that the quality of teaching is good and that pupils are making good progress. These views largely reflect the current situation, but not some of the poor progress and provision in the past which has had its effect on pupils' overall achievement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

For most of the time, and as observed during the inspection, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work, try hard in lessons, and collaborate well with their peers and with teachers. The great majority of the views expressed by pupils, parents and carers indicate that pupils feel safe in school. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and show an understanding of the different reasons and causes that give rise to bullying, such as cyber-bullying or name-calling. They have confidence in the staff to deal with issues when they arise.

Comments from pupils, staff, parents and carers indicate, however, that there is some poor behaviour from a few pupils, both within the classroom and around the school. New behaviour policies have been discussed and agreed by staff. However, staff are concerned that not all are following the agreed procedures. On the other hand, pupils with behavioural difficulties feel that the reasons for awarding yellow and red cards are clear, and that the system is helping them to improve their behaviour.

The school's drive to promote the importance of regular attendance has seen a

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marked improvement in the level of attendance over the last year. This has improved from below average to above average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body have worked exceptionally hard to deal with four years of staff redundancies as the number of pupils on roll has fallen. At the same time, they have striven to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Through the regular monitoring of teachers' performance, the much more rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and the improvements in pupils' achievement, the school has shown that it has the capacity to improve further. Staff have also worked with great dedication and responded well to the increasing demands of the school's leaders. However, these efforts have not been without toll. Insufficient communication has led to misunderstandings and a team which is not as united as it needs to be to move the school from satisfactory to good.

Nevertheless, the many changes which have been implemented have resulted in a school which is improving the quality of education it provides for all pupils and which ensures there is no discrimination. There are thorough procedures to promote equality, such as those for meeting the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and for helping those pupils who join the school speaking little or no English. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

The curriculum is developing, if somewhat unevenly, reflecting a varying contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In some classes, teachers adopt a creative approach to curricular planning which takes into consideration pupils' interests and views and helps to develop their cultural understanding. In others, pupils are given good opportunities to engage in investigative and practical work and to take time to reflect, which contributes well to their spiritual development. In a few classes, however, curricular planning is not as imaginative and does not fully engage or motivate pupils or contribute as successfully to their wider personal development. Opportunities are provided in varying measure for pupils to practise their writing across the curriculum, but staff do not always make best use of these opportunities to consolidate and develop pupils' writing skills.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broadlands Primary School, Hereford, HR1 1NZ

My colleague and I enjoyed our recent visit to your school. We should like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us. It is clear from our conversations that most of you enjoy your school and that you are trying hard to improve your work and behaviour. Your school currently provides you with a satisfactory education, but it is improving steadily. These are the main strengths and some of the areas for development which we found.

- Your progress is improving and standards are at the expected level by the end of Year 6. Standards in writing are not as high as in reading or mathematics.
- Most of you behave well in lessons and around the school, but a few do not always behave as well as you should and get too many yellow and red cards.
- Much of the teaching in the school is good; in a few classes, the teachers do not challenge you enough or insist on high enough standards in your work.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to improve the school, but they are not always consistent in their approach to managing the school.

In order to help you make better progress and reach higher standards, we have asked all teachers to ensure they provide you with work which is sufficiently challenging and interesting for all of you. We have asked them to pay special attention to developing your writing skills, by giving you more detailed feedback on your writing in English lessons and when you produce writing for other subjects. We have also asked the staff to communicate and work more closely together to ensure that they all have a consistent approach to following procedures.

You can help to make your school even better by trying your hardest to improve your writing and making sure that everyone's behaviour is of the highest standard. We hope you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Graham Sims
Lead inspector

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