

Bracken Lane Primary and Nursery School

Bracken Lane, Retford, DN22 7EU

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good overall and some of it is outstanding.
- Almost all the pupils make good or better progress and learn well in their lessons.
- Results when the pupils leave Year 6 are well above the national average.
- The school is using additional funding effectively to raise standards and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are making good and improved progress.
- Pupils behave well and say they feel safe and cared for well.
- Pupils enjoy school because the lessons are made interesting and fun.
- The headteacher leads the school very effectively and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and all the staff.
- The regular checks on teaching and the advice given to teachers have ensured that the teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school because they regularly check on how well it is doing. They are therefore able to provide an excellent balance of support and challenge.
- Attendance rates have improved for the last three years and are now above the national average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of the teaching requires improvement.
- Pupils' attainment by the age of seven has fluctuated in recent years, although it is now improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. Every class was observed at least once.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, several staff members, including senior and middle leaders, and there was a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents' views were sought through discussions at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of the 27 questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and the minutes of various meetings.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Isobel Randall

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- All the pupils currently speak English as their main language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and those eligible for free school meals, (the pupil premium), is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported through 'school action' is broadly average. The proportion supported at 'school action plus' or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that all teaching is good or better before July 2013 by:
 - maximising the time for pupils to undertake their own work in lessons
 - ensuring that teachers' planning promotes more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across all subject areas
 - ensuring that all pupils are clear about the next steps to improve their work so that they can build upon the recent improvements in Key Stage 1
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists across several classes in the school so that teachers can learn from each other.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skill and knowledge that are in line with those expected for their age. The teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and so children settle well into school life and make good progress.
- Progress over recent years has fluctuated in Years 1 and 2 but the pupils made good progress last year and this is now being maintained in the current year.
- As a result, good progress is now clearly evident throughout the school because the school leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is consistently well above average.
- Pupils make much better than expected progress in mathematics and reading because teachers have high expectations, good subject knowledge and good questioning skills, which the pupils respond to very well.
- The progress made by the pupils in their writing has improved considerably, partly because of the good and outstanding teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Therefore the gaps in attainment compared to mathematics and reading are closing. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Pupils' progress in reading is particularly good. Pupils say that they love reading. This is because the teaching of reading skills is very effective and most pupils have great confidence in their reading ability.
- The senior leaders and subject leaders keep a close watch on how pupils make progress and this has been enhanced by a new system that is effectively tracking pupils' progress. They hold meetings regularly with all the teachers to identify those pupils who are falling behind and to give an extra boost to their learning in smaller groups with adult support.
- Disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, make good progress because the staff check their progress closely. The work is, therefore, usually set at the right level and they receive good-quality support from well-trained teaching assistants and teachers.
- The more-able pupils also benefit from work that is set at the right level for them in most lessons so that they are challenged to think carefully about their work. This is particularly true in mathematics where several of the pupils achieved Level 6 at the end of Year 6 in 2012. This is much higher than the expected level for pupils of this age.
- Many of the older pupils have a good understanding of the level at which they are working. Pupils across the school like the targets set for them by the teachers to improve reading, writing and mathematics. These focus their efforts and contribute well to their progress. However the use of targets remains inconsistent in some classes.
- The school leadership is using the pupil premium funding to target support for individuals and small groups of pupils who need the most help. This is now proving effective and, as a result, the progress of these pupils has improved and any gaps in their results compared to their peers have closed.

- The great majority of parents responding to the online questionnaire believe that their children make good progress. This was also evident from discussions with parents.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan work for the pupils that is interesting and enjoyable, and which motivates them to learn well. Expectations are usually very high, particularly in terms of behaviour. Pupils responded enthusiastically, for example, in an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 2 where the pupils were working together to develop rules about changes to spelling needed when adding 'ing' to a word.
- In the better lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and the teachers use probing questions that make the pupils think carefully about their answers, extend their speaking and listening skills and improve their use of vocabulary. In a small minority of lessons the teachers do not give sufficient time for the pupils to do their own work and consequently the pupils' progress is slowed.
- Relationships are a real strength and the teachers treat the older pupils as mature individuals.
- Marking is usually successful at explaining to the pupils why a piece of work is good but sometimes lacks clear guidance on how they might improve their work.
- Teaching very effectively promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils work together well, value the opinions of others, show good awareness of other cultures, and lessons are rarely, if ever, disrupted through unacceptable behaviour.
- Resources are well prepared, including the effective use of information and communication technology in lessons. The motivating resources help enliven and extend pupils' learning. This was particularly true in a science lesson where pupils were experimenting to find which types of paper might work best at keeping the helicopters they had constructed in the air for the longest time. They had a clear understanding of fair testing and worked exceptionally well together in their groups.
- The school leadership has improved the outdoor learning area in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection but the relatively small area adjacent to the Reception class lacks some of the learning opportunities that can be found inside the classroom.
- Careful planning ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well, often in small groups led by very effective teachers and teaching assistants.
- From responses to the online survey and discussions during the inspection, it is clear that parents are extremely pleased with the teaching in the school. As one parent said, 'The teachers are always friendly and helpful even when they may have had a difficult day. I have nothing but praise for them'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to do well. They are motivated, concentrate and persevere in completing the work set for them, and enjoy what

they do.

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are kindly, considerate, polite and courteous and made the inspection team feel very welcome. The behavioural records confirm that this is the case over time too.
- Good routines and high expectations of behaviour are well established in the Nursery class, where there is a very calm, friendly learning atmosphere. The children learn to share and work and play together cooperatively. These qualities are carried with them as they progress through the school.
- Pupils understand the various forms of bullying but say that they feel safe in school and bullying in any form is very rare indeed and is dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school. Pupils are clear about the possible dangers of the internet and know how to stay safe when using it.
- Parents also have confidence that bullying is not an issue. As one parent said, 'This is the only school I have known where bullying doesn't appear to be happening'.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have worked closely with parents to improve attendance, and rates of attendance are now above national averages.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the governing body, provides a clear direction for the school. A rigorous programme of checks on the teaching and learning taking place has led to sustained improvement and so the pupils continue to achieve consistently high levels of attainment when they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Decisions about pay rates are based on the quality of teaching.
 - School leaders recognised the need to extend the leadership and management responsibilities to more staff and introduced a programme to achieve this following the last inspection. This programme has been extremely successful and this aspect of broader leadership is now a strength of the school because all staff are now regularly checking on the progress pupils make in all subjects.
 - Teachers are all given clear steps for improvement. The views expressed by the staff in discussions and through their questionnaires were very positive indeed about their roles in school. They indicate clearly that the staff appreciate and enjoy working at the school and value the training organised for them to aid further improvements in their practice.
 - The range of subjects and activities for pupils encourages enjoyable learning and pupils are therefore engaged in their work. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their reading skills when studying other subjects. The good use of visits, including residential visits for Year 4 and Year 6, enriches the work the pupils undertake. A good range of clubs and activities also helps to broaden pupils' experience.
 - The local authority has provided positive support to the school over time, through annual review meetings, network meetings for subject leaders, and particularly in joint working to support pupils with significant disabilities and learning difficulties.
-

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they are working closely with staff to make the school even better. They have supported the school in maintaining good levels of progress in literacy and numeracy. They have a thorough knowledge of the quality of teaching in school and the steps being taken to improve this still further. Systems are in place for the approval of pay rises so that these are tied to how well staff are doing. They also understand the performance data and how this compares with that of other schools. The school is therefore well placed to improve further. Governors have an excellent understanding of how the pupil premium has enabled small-group work and one-to-one adult support to help pupils achieve well. They check that the funds have been used successfully. The safeguarding, health and safety of pupils, including checks on staff appointments, are good because staff and governors have received the appropriate training. Governors work closely with school leaders and staff to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination. Governors also regularly attend professional training to improve their practice further.
-

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122560
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	403490

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennie Heath
Headteacher	Kate Brown
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2008
Telephone number	01777 705017
Fax number	01777 705017
Email address	office3@brackenlane.notts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

