



Breachwood Green Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117119
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 290729
Inspection dates 11–12 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Gilbert

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Oxford Road
School category	Community		Breachwood Green, Breachwood Green
Age range of pupils	4–11		Nr Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8NP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01438 833115
Number on roll (school)	106	Fax number	01438 833796
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs. Jean Wood
		Headteacher	Mrs. Rosemary Bethel
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	11–12 September 2006	290729

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This village school is much smaller than most primary schools, with pupils taught in four mixed-age classes. Mainly from a White British heritage, most pupils come from Breachwood Green, others from neighbouring villages and the local towns of Luton, Letchworth, Hitchin and Stevenage. Attainment on entry is generally average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Breachwood Green is a good school. The inspection agrees with the school's judgements. It is a popular school and is oversubscribed. It works very effectively with parents. One parent said, 'I have every praise for Breachwood Green. The teachers are super. The school feels very much like a little community.' Parents' questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and concur with this view. Achievement is good. Pupils start the school with attainment that is generally average, although in some years it has been above average. In the Reception class, pupils concentrate well and make satisfactory progress. Progress is good in other classes. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science, although in the last two years the school has not met its agreed targets for those to attain the higher levels. Some higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. The school makes constructive use of test results to identify areas of weakness and strengthen the teaching of these elements. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress and achieve well as a result of effective support and the implementation of plans to meet their needs. The pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in their outstanding attendance. Their personal development and well-being are good. They approach their education with great enthusiasm. They behave well and almost all show good attitudes to their work. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to life in the community. They raise money for charities and present concerts for parents and friends. The school council team leaders make a valuable contribution to school life. Pupils understand very well the need to stay safe and the value of adopting a healthy lifestyle, supported by the provision of fresh fruit and healthy midday meals. Links with a local secondary school and specialist sports coaching have raised pupils' awareness of the importance of keeping fit. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Daily assemblies are happy gatherings with a strong spiritual element and a respectful atmosphere. The school promotes social and moral values well through a system of rewards that recognises the pupils' friendly and supportive attitudes towards each other. Cultural understanding is developed satisfactorily through a range of activities, including visits by sculptors and artists, but the school recognises that pupils' multicultural awareness is an area for further development. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and mostly it is good. Lessons are well structured and mostly planned around clear objectives for learning and criteria for success that are shared effectively. The range of activities is good, but the provision does not always challenge pupils of different abilities, especially the more able. Marking is regular and thorough, with helpful comments for improvement. Knowledgeable teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and their involvement with the pupils is well planned. Assessment is good and used effectively to track pupils' progress towards their end of year targets. However, the target-setting process does not sufficiently involve pupils, so they lack a clear understanding as to the ways in which their targets could be reached or exceeded. The curriculum is broad and generally well balanced, although the school is rightly reviewing provision in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Leadership and management are good because of the high quality strategic direction given by

the headteacher. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and plans future developments to improve its provision. A monitoring programme is in place and teachers have benefited greatly from regular assessments of their work. Subject leaders make a good contribution to the monitoring and development of English, mathematics and science. However, partly as a result of the workload in a small school, there is insufficient focus on the development of other subjects. Governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are rightly reviewing policies and their implementation. The school gives good value for money and is well placed to continue the improvements made since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consistently challenge more able pupils in both key stages so that more attain higher standards. - Develop the use of targets so that pupils understand more specifically what their next steps should be and are clear when they have attained them. - Improve the leadership of subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils' attainment on entry varies year by year. It is usually average, but in some years it is above average. In Reception the pupils make satisfactory progress towards the expected early learning goals for their age. This start is built upon well in the main school, where progress is good, although more rapid in the older classes. Test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been above national averages for several years, and pupils achieve well. However, the school's challenging targets for those to reach Level 3 at the end of Year 2 and Level 5 at the end of Year 6 have not been met for the last two years. Potentially higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged by teachers and they do not achieve all that they could. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well; for the last two years, all reached at least Level 2 or Level 4 at the appropriate key stage. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Pupils apply their skills in a wide range of contexts.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' attendance and enjoyment are outstanding. They respond positively, behaving well in lessons and around the school; almost all work hard and concentrate well during lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are integrated fully so that they take part in all aspects of school life. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to life in the community and take on different responsibilities. They respond well to opportunities for them to have a say in the running of their school, which stands them in good stead for their future education and economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers build very good relationships, plan a range of interesting activities, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and provide suitable challenges on most occasions. However, more able pupils are not always suitably challenged. Teaching assistants work well to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities, who as a result make good progress. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and helpful, and pupils benefit from discussing areas for improvement with their teachers. The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of the teaching and gives appropriate guidance and support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities generally meet the needs of all pupils. They achieve well in developing literacy, numeracy and science skills because a varied programme of work has been planned. The range of activities in some other subjects is more restricted. The school is well resourced with computers and laptops that are used well to teach ICT skills. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements in many subjects. Visitors and visits, including valuable residential trips, enrich pupils' opportunities effectively to learn about many topics. A good range of lunchtime and after school clubs develops pupils' social and physical skills. The investment in small play equipment gives a real purpose to pupils' activities, particularly at lunchtime.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are cared for sensitively in a welcoming and friendly environment. The school makes all required checks on adults who work there; staff are aware of child protection and safety procedures; risk assessments are rigorous: as a result, pupils are kept as safe as they can be. The rewards system is a valuable feature of the school. It encourages good behaviour, effort and success. The school tracks pupils' progress well, but does not involve pupils sufficiently in understanding what their targets are and the steps to reach them. Regular opportunities are provided for parents to meet the staff and to receive progress reports.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership that is clearly focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of all pupils. Subject leaders play a valuable role in the

monitoring and development of English, mathematics and science. However, partly because of the demands on time in a small school, with each teacher responsible for three subject areas, the leadership of other subjects is less well developed. The headteacher recognises that this is an area for development. The school has effective self-evaluation procedures that take into account the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils. The outcomes are used well in planning the school's priorities. Governors know the school well through their regular visits and reports and give knowledgeable support in areas such as finance and personnel. Finances are managed and targeted appropriately.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils Thank you for welcoming me to your school and helping me find out what you have been doing. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and to share two of your assemblies. Please thank your parents for sending in so many of those questionnaires and for spending time talking to me on the playground. There are many good things about the school. You make good progress and achieve well in end of year tests. You told me that you enjoy school and particularly like making good friends. You are well behaved and you want to learn and to do well, although a small number of you do not concentrate all the time in lessons. You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and what makes a balanced diet and you know that you must take regular exercise to stay healthy. You are so lucky, for I know you visit interesting places, and the Year 5 and 6 pupils have an opportunity to stay away from home, in Wales and on the Isle of Wight. I think that there are some things that the school should do to help you to reach even higher standards. I have asked the school to make sure that you all have clear targets to aim for and know exactly what you need to do to improve your work. Some of you find your work too easy so I have suggested that you are given more challenging tasks. Lastly, you do particularly well in English, mathematics and science, but the school needs to ensure that you are also learning enough about all the other subjects. I know that there are exciting times ahead for you and I wish you all every success in the future. Yours sincerely Keith Gilbert Inspector