

Broomfields Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111128
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	310509
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Thompson

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Jervis
Headteacher	Mr Keith Greenwood
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Bridge Lane Appleton Warrington Cheshire WA4 3AH
Telephone number	01925 265297
Fax number	01925 861734

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves a relatively advantaged urban area of south Warrington. The majority of pupils are White British. Around 10% of pupils are from a number of minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which gives good value for money. It has some particularly strong features. Personal development and well-being are outstanding and, as a result, pupils flourish in the school's happy and lively atmosphere. They achieve well and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. The school has gained the support of the great majority of parents. Many comment on how well they feel their children are doing. They appreciate the quality of information they receive through newsletters and the school's website as it enables them to participate in their children's education.

A number of factors are influential in helping pupils of all levels of attainment to make good progress and achieve well. Above all, the ethos in the school that has been created by the staff builds confidence and team spirit. Strong relationships support pupils' outstanding personal development. Teaching is good, so that lessons are interesting and enjoyable. The curriculum is designed well to support learning by making appropriate links between subjects, with particular attention given to developing the key skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). Additional experiences provided through residential courses and the many extra-curricular activities contribute much to personal development. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is exemplary. They warmly welcome visitors and are confidently open in expressing their ideas. They show care and concern for others, eagerly seizing opportunities to contribute in lessons and to the school community. Because of the progress they make in acquiring key skills and their awareness of how to stay safe and lead healthy lives, pupils are very well prepared indeed for the future.

The school provides good care and support for its pupils. Their progress in all aspects of school life is monitored carefully. Detailed continuous assessment enables staff to quickly identify any difficulties and to take appropriate action. Teachers are consistently supportive in their comments on pupils' contributions in class and through their marking of work. Where marking is not so consistent is in providing pupils with clear information as to how well they are doing in relation to their targets and what they need to do to improve. Even where this is done, it is not always clear that this guidance is followed up by teachers or pupils to ensure that improvement takes place.

Leadership and management are good, with some strong features. The school's well-organised improvement plan is based on realistic evaluation that comes from close monitoring of the school's performance. Good systems have been put in place to make sure that what the school is doing is effective. The headteacher and staff share a common purpose, focused on improvement, which results in the continued upward trend of the school's results and in the developing curriculum. Teachers and classroom assistants support each other well to the benefit of pupils' progress. Governors are closely involved in supporting and checking on the work of the school. Targets set for performance are demanding and have underpinned the school's good improvement since the last inspection. Progress towards targets is monitored carefully through regular reports from staff. In view of the improvement that has been managed, the plans for the future and the strong collegiate atmosphere established among staff, the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of marking so that pupils know clearly how well they are doing in relation to their targets and what they need to do next to meet them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with above average standards, although there has been a slight decline in overall levels in recent years. They achieve well as they move through the school so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average in most subjects. There are particularly high standards in art. Results in national tests in English, mathematics and science have been well above average and have shown a steady improvement over recent years. Overall, girls' results were better than those of boys in 2006 but boys were further ahead of their national average. Provisional results for 2007 show that the trend of improvement continues with results being close to the school's challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well because of the high quality support that they receive. A principal factor in pupils' good progress is the way that the school's analysis of results and assessments enables teachers to identify areas of potential underachievement and to take appropriate action. A good example is the way that standards and in turn, test results in science, have improved because the school identified causes of some underperformance in previous tests and took positive action.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is a caring school that celebrates and promotes high quality relationships. Pupils greatly enjoy their time at school and attendance levels are high. They are exceptionally well behaved and well mannered. Pupils work very harmoniously in groups as a result of the school's emphasis on teamwork. They readily share ideas and follow agreed rules, showing respect for others' opinions. Pupils feel safe and valued. They demonstrate high levels of care and consideration, particularly towards their younger colleagues. Safe practices are learned throughout the school. A well-established and enthusiastic school council promotes a strong sense of community; its members are proud of their achievements. A typical comment is, 'Everyone in this school is trying their best to make this a good school.' Pupils show an awareness of the needs of others by raising money for a range of local and global charities. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives by the school's focus on developing high standards of literacy and numeracy together with well-developed ICT skills. Healthy lifestyles are understood, being recognised through awards such as the Activemark Gold and the Healthy Schools initiative. Pupils develop their self-confidence and discover interests and skills through residential experience. They appreciate the opportunities to develop friendships, understanding and independence. These contribute very effectively to their spiritual and moral development and are very well supported by regular daily assemblies that celebrate good work and personal achievement. Differing cultures are celebrated through dance and art displays, with the school holding the Artsmark Gold Award as recognition of the quality and variety of its work. Visitors from a range of religious backgrounds very effectively promote pupils' understanding of the diversity of different local cultures and religions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan their lessons well to engage and maintain pupils' interest. They share their enthusiasm for subjects so that pupils are eager to learn. Lessons are interesting and enjoyable.

Consequently, pupils respond well to teachers' expectation that they will work hard. Teachers' use of praise and positive feedback contributes very positively to pupils' confidence and outstanding personal development. A strong feature of lessons across the school is the focus on 'thinking skills', which encourages pupils to become independent and creative learners. Teachers make good use of assessment to check pupils' understanding and ensure good progress. The difference between outstanding lessons and those that are less than outstanding is the degree to which teachers give pupils opportunities to contribute, so that their understanding can be checked. Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together in supporting learning and in working with small groups of pupils with learning difficulties, the gifted and talented, and vulnerable pupils, to ensure that their diverse learning needs are fully met. Teachers' marking is thorough and unfailingly supportive; however, it does not always inform pupils about their progress towards their targets or tell them clearly what their next steps should be to reach them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has recently moved towards a curriculum which further embraces creativity, and makes links between subjects to help pupils make greater sense of their learning. Although it is early days, it is starting to show a positive impact. All pupils enjoy weekly French lessons and experience European language days, which help to prepare them for life in a diverse society. The school makes very effective use of partnerships to enhance the curriculum and a wide range of visitors, visits and residential opportunities enriches it further. Residential courses promote learning in the arts, science and physical education. Pupils say, 'On the Year 6 residential you can do extreme things that are a challenge.' The curriculum is enhanced by an impressive range of extra-curricular activities that enable the development of skills, interests and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good pastoral support, particularly for its most vulnerable pupils. All staff show high levels of care and concern and the school has established effective links with other agencies to provide specialist guidance and support. The school is aware of the importance of transitional arrangements and works closely with both its partner infant school and the main secondary school. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and well established procedures ensure pupils are kept safe in school. The school has developed robust systems to track pupils' academic progress, and staff use this data well to identify any pupils not making the progress they should. The school employs a range of flexible teaching techniques such as setting pupils by ability, targeting groups and implementing intervention programmes. These initiatives are continuing to raise pupils' achievement. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support to meet their individual learning needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Strong leadership by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher effectively underpins the school's improvement. The headteacher's understanding of the school's needs is seen in the development of a very effective middle management team. The team members have worked exceptionally well together to redesign the curriculum to make better use of teachers' expertise

and to provide pupils with relevant and enjoyable learning. They are a key part of the system of regularly checking the quality of classroom practice that has led to improvements in teaching and learning, contributing to pupils' good achievement. The school's leaders make very good use of well-developed partnerships with other schools and outside agencies to enhance pupils' learning. Governors are particularly well informed about the school's work, its quality and priorities for improvement. They are knowledgeable and able, supporting the school exceptionally well whilst holding it appropriately to account through regular reviews. Governors are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. The school's evaluation of its performance is realistic and largely matches inspection findings.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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

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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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

Thank you very much for the way that you welcomed us into your school. We are particularly grateful to those of you who told us about your life and work in the school. We were very impressed by your good manners and excellent behaviour - you are a credit to your school, your parents and yourselves.

You will be pleased to know that we agree with you that yours is a good school. The school is run well by your headteacher and the senior staff. Everyone cares for you very well so that you feel safe and valued. You are taught well so that you make good progress. Lessons are enjoyable and there are lots of interesting things to do. You also show care and concern for others. We admired the way you get on and work well together, listening to each other and sharing ideas. You obviously get a lot out of meeting the challenges of the residential courses.

Because your headteacher and staff keep a close eye on how well you are doing, they already have ideas to make the school an even better place to learn. The only thing we have asked them to do is to make sure that when your work is marked you know how much progress you are making towards your targets and what you need to do next to help you reach them. You can help by making sure that you follow any guidance you are given to help you improve.

Thank you again for all the help you gave us. We wish you well for the future.