

Brook House Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107037
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324511
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Pattinson

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 (total)	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Howes
Headteacher	Mr Mark Hinchliffe
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2005
School address	School Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S20 1EG
Telephone number	0114 2487754
Fax number	0114 2511948

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average junior school situated on the eastern side of Sheffield. The local area is less disadvantaged than the average nationally. Almost all pupils who start in Year 3 come from the adjacent infant school, live in the local area and are White British. The proportions of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who are entitled to free school meals are well below the national averages. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language is small and much lower than found nationally. The school achieved the eco schools Gold Standard Award, the PE Activemark Standard and the Healthy Schools Award in 2007. A new headteacher was appointed from September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a school that provides a satisfactory quality of education. The headteacher provides clear direction and has a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school provides strong pastoral support and good levels of care for its pupils. As a result, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils say they enjoy school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, are happy to shoulder responsibility and support good causes, and are equipped well for their next stage of their education. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. 'Teachers and pupils get on well' is a typical comment which helps to explain the good relationships at all levels and good behaviour, which underpins learning.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are above national levels when pupils enter and leave the school. Most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the work of the well managed teaching assistants. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but not as consistent as it should be. For example, the more able pupils do not always learn as well as they could because teaching is varied and work set is sometimes too easy for them. Teachers use praise well to encourage pupils but do not always tell them exactly how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work. Not all teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to improve their writing skills, discuss their work or engage in investigative tasks to help stimulate their interest and enjoyment. As a result, standards in writing are not as high as they should be. The satisfactory curriculum has strengths in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and a good range of enrichment activities and links with other schools and institutions which help broaden pupils' horizons and extend their learning, but it does not always fully engage all learners.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, bring about improvements in important areas. Priorities for development are appropriate to help raise pupils' achievement. Staff work effectively as a team. Subject leaders are being empowered to enable them to have an informed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and act upon it. A systematic approach to tracking pupils' progress has been introduced. Data is carefully analysed to identify pupils who need extra help. The monitoring of teaching does not focus sharply enough on pupils' learning to be of most benefit. The supportive governing body understands its responsibilities for raising standards and checking the work of the school but is not as rigorous as it could be. The school provides sound value for money and has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in the quality of pupils' writing.
- Ensure that the monitoring of the work of the school by leaders and governors is systematic, rigorous and evaluative and focuses sharply on pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that all pupils, especially the more able, are challenged, know how well they are doing and how they can improve.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides a range of exciting and engaging activities that motivate all pupils.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspection evidence confirms that pupils enter and leave the school with above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Test results have varied from year to year. In English and mathematics, the number of pupils reaching national levels has slowly improved over the past four years. More pupils than average now reach the national standard. However, this improvement is not reflected in the numbers who reach the higher level, which remain similar to the national picture. Pupils perform better in reading than writing. Although standards in science have fallen slightly this year, provisional results remain above average. Evidence gained during the inspection shows that pupils make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive. More able pupils do not all make the best possible progress because work is not always matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and most are courteous and friendly. They are motivated to behave well through initiatives such as 'Fun Friday Club'. Behaviour in classrooms and on the playground is good. However, it is less good when pupils move around the school. This is because codes of behaviour are not consistently applied or given a high enough profile. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that the rare incidents of bullying are quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils readily assume responsibilities, such as litter picking, being buddies to Year 3 pupils and selling Remembrance Day poppies to visitors. School council members carry out their duties conscientiously. Attendance is excellent. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles through 'walking on Wednesdays', healthy school meals and a healthy tuck shop run by pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because these important areas are embedded in everything the school does. Pupils have a strong sense of working for others in the community through fund-raising activities and links with local organisations, such as St Mary's Church. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through art, religious education, geography and assemblies. As a result, they are soundly prepared for life in a multicultural society. Pupils develop good basic skills which support their future education and later lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Secure relationships, effective management of pupils and good use of praise and encouragement are positive features of the satisfactory teaching and learning. Enthusiastic and professional teaching assistants provide high quality support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensuring they make good progress. However, the quality of teaching is too varied. In the best lessons, the work is graded to help meet the needs of all pupils, the pace is brisk, teachers generate enthusiasm and resources are used well to extend learning. However, this is

not always the case. Pupils sometimes do not always know exactly what they must learn. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to seek pupils' views of the progress they have made to help them plan the next steps in their learning. In some lessons there is too much talk from teachers leaving too little time for pupils to engage in independent work, which is not always challenging enough, especially for the more able pupils. These weaknesses restrict progress and lead to reduced enjoyment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum contains all that it should but does not fully engage all learners in exciting learning activities. However, ICT is well represented. Art is high profile and attractive displays of good quality artwork adorn walls and corridors. Personal and social development is given increasing emphasis. However, there are too few planned links between subjects and with the outside world to help make learning more relevant for pupils. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop important skills through other subjects and to write at length to help drive up standards. Investigative and problem-solving activities are too low profile leading to too much passive learning. However, pupils enjoy and benefit from a wide range of additional activities, including sport, drama and music, that enable them to develop exciting new skills. Educational visits including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils to France help broaden pupils' horizons. Themed weeks in mathematics and science, the celebration of festivals, such as Divali, and teaching about different ethnic groups extend pupils' experiences and help develop community cohesion.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school successfully promotes the well-being of all pupils in its care, including the most vulnerable pupils, boosting their self-esteem through its high quality pastoral support. For example, a 'worry box' enables stressful issues to be addressed in confidence and helps to ensure pupils' emotional well-being. Safeguarding and security arrangements are clear, well organised and meet government requirements. Leaders are aware that some staff have yet to complete the most recent child protection training. The leadership, support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is especially strong. Parents are pleased with what the school offers. Links with other schools and wider community groups help promote satisfactory community cohesion. However, academic guidance is at an early stage of development. Good practice is evident, but approaches are inconsistent. Most pupils do not have clear targets to help steer their learning. As a result, they are not involved enough in the assessment of their own work and in understanding what they need to do to improve. Consequently, opportunities are missed to promote better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, supported by his deputy, has begun to develop shared responsibility and accountability at all levels. As a result, there is a clear direction, good team spirit and effective communication. The introduction of more detailed tracking systems is enabling leaders to carefully check how well pupils are doing. Data from national tests has begun to be analysed more closely to help teachers identify and overcome weaknesses. Subject leaders are being

empowered to help them more effectively monitor the school's work and performance. The senior leadership team is being strengthened to make a more effective contribution to school improvement. However, rigorous monitoring and evaluation is still in its early stages. Introduced initiatives have yet to make any real impact to help raise achievement further. School self-evaluation is only just starting to focus on the outcomes of learning and pupils' achievement. However, the headteacher has a realistic and accurate view of the school and the quality of education it provides. As a result, improvement planning focuses on appropriate priorities. The monitoring of teaching does not yet focus sharply enough on how well pupils learn to be of maximum benefit to teachers. Governors are supportive of the school but are not yet giving enough attention to strengthening further its academic performance and rigorously checking on the school's work.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Brook House Junior School, Sheffield, S20 1EG

Thank you very much for the welcome and help you gave to the inspection team when we inspected your school recently. I would like to share with you what we found out about your school. We think most of you are friendly and polite to each other and the teachers and other adults who work with you. We like the way adults care for you and give you lots of encouragement so that you feel safe, happy and try hard with your work. Your attendance is excellent and you arrive on time, which helps you build on what you learn. You know about the importance of having a healthy lifestyle and taking regular exercise to help keep you fit and well. We know that most of you really enjoy school and like the visits, visitors and clubs that help to make your school life even more enjoyable.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. Your headteacher has started to make changes to help improve how well you do. Your teachers and other adults want your school to be the best it can be and are working closely with him to make this happen.

We have asked that you are given more opportunities to improve your writing in order for you to do even better. We want all your teachers to give you work that challenges and interests you (especially the quick learners) and to make sure you know what you need to do to improve. You can help by letting your teachers know if work is too easy or hard for you. We want the people in charge to check often how well the school is doing towards meeting its targets so that it can become better and better. We would also like to see you have more exciting and interesting topics in your lessons. This will help you make even better progress than you do now!

Thank you again for your help when we inspected your school.