

Broom Cottages Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114096
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325942
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	335
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Whitehead
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Laws
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Broom Cottages Ferryhill County Durham DL17 8AN
Telephone number	01740 651363
Fax number	01740 656828

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Inspection number	325942

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school is in an area of County Durham where socio-economic conditions are below average. Pupils' eligibility for free school meals is above average. Nearly all pupils come from White British families. A higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

The school is currently led by an acting headteacher who is the substantive deputy headteacher. The local authority has provided support through, amongst other things, an experienced associate headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up his post in September. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of Nursery and Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

Significant improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum have led to this school now providing a satisfactory education for the pupils it serves. Inspection evidence clearly shows that this is an improving school and has several elements that are now good.

The school's continuing improvement is reflected in the positive way that most parents talk about the school. The following comment made by one parent was typical of many, 'In the past months the school has had its problems, but new strategies have been put into place and you can see this in the children's work. The children are striving to reach their goals.'

Effective leadership is being successful in the drive for improving standards through a broad, balanced curriculum with better quality teaching. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the point it has reached on its journey of improvement is accurate. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve further.

Teaching and learning throughout the school has improved. Teaching is now satisfactory overall and in some lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, it is good or better. Pupils enjoy their learning and, in most lessons, learning is fun and purposeful which helps them to make faster progress. Improved teaching is having a significant impact on eradicating the widespread underachievement previously seen. Standards are currently below average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall although the resulting rise in standards is slower in English than in mathematics. Opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy skills across the curriculum are improving but are still too limited at Key Stage 1.

The school promotes pupils personal development, including their spiritual, moral, and social aspects well. This is done through strong school ethos, the curriculum and high expectations around school. As a result, the vast majority of pupils become mature, responsible, independent and thoughtful. Most pupils demonstrate very good behaviour around school. Pupils are well cared for and the school works well in partnership with other agencies to secure their well-being and safety. Cultural development is satisfactory.

The school is making a positive contribution to local community cohesion. Pupils have a strong sense of equality and fairness. Pupils learn to respect themselves and others and are now becoming successful learners who are able to confidently take their place in the 21st Century. Pupils play a significant role in creating a positive school community and are proud and upbeat about their school. The school is active in promoting opportunities for pupils to play a role in their wider community. However, many pupils' understanding of cultures and faiths different from their own, both nationally and internationally, is superficial. Too little is being done to enable all pupils to have meaningful experiences beyond their own, largely mono-cultural, community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children start Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those generally expected of children of their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the time they leave the Reception class they are

below average especially in communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. They make very good progress in personal and creative development. Overall, children make good progress and achieve well from their starting points.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes rapidly grow in confidence. Teaching is good. Activities are well matched to the children's abilities, interests and needs. The children enjoy the wide range of activities provided both indoors and in the newly developed outdoor spaces. They soon learn to work and play together with a feeling of security. Children behave exceptionally well. Children develop very good relationships with staff.

Management is effective. The welfare of the children is good and children learn in a safe environment. Adults effectively use observations of children to identify what individuals and groups need as their next steps. Parents are pleased with the information and guidance they receive and the rate of their children's progress. Much has been done since the last inspection to improve provision, particularly in outdoor learning and in the teaching of communication, language and literacy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure opportunities to improve literacy skills are developed across the curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to broaden their understanding of cultural and social diversity and the heritage of our nation.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards reached in 2008 by seven-year-old pupils were below average although higher than the previous two years. A more able cohort of Year 6 pupils reached average standards in national tests in 2008 which represented satisfactory progress from their starting points. Inspection evidence shows the current Year 6 are on track to reach standards that are generally below the national average in English and mathematics. Again, this represents satisfactory achievement given their starting points.

Pupils who have fallen behind their peers or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities get extra help and their achievement is satisfactory. Able pupils also make satisfactory progress because they are given more challenge and additional activities.

Inspection evidence shows that the school is effective in raising standards and many pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making accelerated progress. This is eradicating previous underachievement. Rates of progress in Key Stage 1, particularly in literacy, are also rising, but at a slower pace than in Years 4, 5 and 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory. While pupils develop a good understanding of their own

local culture and that of a twinned town in Germany, the opportunities provided to extend this to other cultures within and beyond Britain are limited. There is a strong ethos based on respect and responsibility that permeates through the school. From the earliest days in school, children learn independence and responsibility and contribute to the life of the school community. As pupils get older, there are many opportunities for them to take responsibility through initiatives such as the school council and play ground buddies.

The vast majority of pupils behave very well around school, being polite and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors. Pupils enjoy school a great deal. Pupils were keen to tell us how much they liked their teachers. They said that they feel safe in school and know that their teachers listen when they have a problem or need support. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly by teachers. Attendance is satisfactory. The school is working closely with other agencies to support and challenge families where patterns of persistent absence have become an issue.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and what they need to do to maintain a healthy life style. They are enthusiastic when describing the range of extra-curricular clubs such as cross country, drama, football and street dance. Pupils also appreciate the playground facilities and swimming pool which they recognise helps them to lead an active lifestyle. Taking into consideration pupils' academic skills they are soundly prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching has improved and the previous inadequate teaching has now been eradicated. The quality of teaching and learning varies throughout the school but is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good or better. In the best lessons, pupils are engaged and motivated. Work is set at an appropriately challenging level so learning is rapid and pupils' good progress makes up for previous underachievement.

In other lessons, where teaching is satisfactory, pupils are well behaved but spend too long sitting and listening to teachers rather than engaging in purposeful learning. Work is less well matched to pupils' needs in these lessons and pupils make satisfactory progress. In all lessons teachers and pupils enjoy very good relations. This results in good levels of pupils' response, attention and willingness to contribute. Marking and feedback to pupils is often good so they know how to improve their work. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now satisfactory with some strong features. Opportunities for practising basic skills are well planned and taught through different subjects, particularly in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 these activities are less well planned and opportunities to extend learning are missed because pupils sometimes spend too long sitting and listening to teachers, rather than speaking, reading and writing themselves. The curriculum is interesting and pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers go to great lengths to excite pupils, using costumes and other props to spark their imagination. The curriculum is adapted well to support the needs and abilities of different learners. Challenging activities for

the more able and talented pupils are planned in school and with other agencies such as the local secondary school. The school has developed support in and out of class for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is well enriched through visits and visitors. However, visits and visitors that develop pupils understanding and appreciation of our multicultural society are rare. There is a good range of after-school clubs. These are popular with pupils and many contribute to their personal development and well-being. Information and communication technology makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning in many subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The school places a high emphasis on this aspect of provision and this is reflected in the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. Good support for vulnerable pupils exists through good liaison with external agencies. Pastoral care is very good and pupils are nurtured well as valued individuals. Procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and meet current government guidelines. The school takes appropriate action to ensure pupils stay safe.

Academic guidance is good overall, although marking and feedback in a minority of classrooms is only satisfactory because it does not help pupils to fully understand how to improve their work. In most classrooms, marking is focused on accelerating learning and the feedback teachers give to pupils is helpful. In these classes, children know their targets, know what they need to do to achieve their targets and they get the support they need to do so. Tracking data is used effectively to identify groups and individuals who need extra support or intervention and this support is quickly and successfully given.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders are relentless in their drive to raise standards through a renewed curriculum and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. They understand where the school is on its improvement journey and recognise the work ahead. The significant amount of work they have put into school improvement means that the school is in a strong position to continue to improve further.

Through improved tracking systems, leaders recognise patterns in pupils' achievement and tackle the causes of underachievement quickly and decisively. Resources provide better value for money because they are well allocated and support school improvement. Similarly, support staff are well deployed to support teachers in raising standards. Staff development has led to teachers becoming more effective throughout the school. Environmental improvements, such as the new outdoor learning spaces in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have led to an improved curriculum and greater enjoyment of learning.

Governors have increased their contribution to the school significantly since the last inspection. Governors ask probing questions and make it their business to understand what data say and what others think of the school's performance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3

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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	2

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

8 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broom Cottages Primary School, Durham, DL17 8AN

You may remember that I came to your school recently with two other inspectors. The purpose of my visit was to see how well your school is doing. I am pleased to be able to tell you that I have found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. In fact, some of the things that your school now offers are good.

You were quick to tell us that you liked your school and your teachers. We could see in lessons that you enjoyed your learning a great deal. Your school seems to be a really happy place to be. We have asked your teachers to make sure you get really good quality opportunities to practise writing, reading and speaking in the Key Stage 1 classes and that you get given good advice on ways that you can improve these important skills.

We all thought that your school helped you grow into mature, sensible and happy young people. We were aware, however, that you didn't seem to know a lot about how other people live their lives in Great Britain and around the world. We have asked your teachers to find ways to help you experience other places and understand more about different cultures and people from different backgrounds to your own. We think you will enjoy this and it will help you in the future when you meet and work with people who don't come from Ferryhill.

Thank you for all of your help during our inspection. Your behaviour, your willingness to talk to us and your enthusiasm for school was wonderful to see. You are a credit to your parents and school.

I wish you all the best for the future

Michael Sheridan

Lead inspector