

# Brookland Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117233
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326553
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Wynford-Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Carol King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Val Townsend
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Elm Drive Cheshunt Waltham Cross Hertfordshire EN8 0RX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 624487
<b>Fax number</b>	01992 623223

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is an average size, serving a mixed catchment area of local authority and private housing. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage. Very few are learning to speak English as an additional language. Historically, the overall standard of attainment on entry was above the national average. However, the school's data shows that for the most recent intakes, attainment on entry is nearer the national average. A lower proportion of pupils than average joins or leaves during the school year. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly similar to that in most schools. Most have been identified as having moderate learning difficulties. The school holds the Healthy School and the Sports Active Mark awards and has been commended for providing a full range of extended services.

## 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 satisfactory school with strengths in the good standards of pupils' personal development, the development of the curriculum and in the quality of care and well-being provided for its pupils. Many parents recognise these strengths - one wrote, 'My children enjoy school and are developing well. I feel confident in the way they are looked after and treated.'

Leaders and managers have acted satisfactorily to bring about improvements following the unpredicted marked drop in standards in 2006. Standards in English fell significantly and were exceptionally low. In 2007, standards rose and were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Provisional national test data suggests that these improvements continued in 2008. Overall standards are once more above average, reflecting those the school achieved in 2005. However, the school is aware that there is still work to do to raise standards in writing for the potentially more able pupils. This is identified as a priority in the good school improvement plan.

Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, there are variations in the rate of pupils' progress as they move through the school. This is because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Overall, it is satisfactory. Whilst there is evidence of some good teaching, too few lessons are taught to this standard. The leadership team is aware of the shortcomings and is providing professional development opportunities to bring about improvement.

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support, and there is a willingness from all staff to embrace change. The relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils feel safe and know who to ask for help. Health and safety procedures are well established and the school complies with the latest requirements for safeguarding. Staff have worked well to review and implement changes to the curriculum, lesson planning, the setting of targets in English and mathematics, and the use of ongoing assessment to match the work to the needs of the pupils.

The recent improvements to the organisation of the curriculum are helping the pupils see the relevance of their learning. As yet, it is too early for these changes to have made a significant impact on standards. Nevertheless, the curriculum is good and supports pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of being healthy and staying safe. They enjoy their education and attendance is above average. They behave well and have a good understanding of cultural development. The school has taken effective steps to promote this aspect of their learning. Music and art feature highly in the curriculum and there are good links with a school in Zambia. Overall, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership. She has correctly identified the priorities for improvement and has recently created curriculum teams to lead these developments. However, these initiatives are still at an early stage of development. There are sound strategies in place for coordinators to monitor the work of the school but they do not track the outcomes of the work of the school sufficiently robustly or compare them against national outcomes. Governors are supportive of the school and are developing their skills in holding the school to account.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in writing across the school by developing it in other subjects.
- Improve teaching by raising expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Extend the work of the curriculum teams to develop leadership and management at all levels.

A small proportion of the 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

There is a noticeable increase in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 in mathematics and science. This is because the school has focused on promoting the pupils' investigative skills in these subjects. However, this improvement in gaining Level 5 is not replicated to the same extent in English. In the 2008 national tests the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 increased, but too few attained Level 5 especially in their writing. This is because these skills were not consolidated and extended in other subjects. In contrast, pupils made good progress in their reading and attained above average standards. Pupils who find learning difficult made similar progress to their peers and attained standards in line with their needs and abilities. There were no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Assessment data for the current Year 6 pupils suggests that they are on track to achieve similar overall standards, with an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 in writing.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their time at school and attendance is above the national average. One boy commented, 'It's a really nice atmosphere at school.' Pupils appreciate and are keen to attend the well-organised breakfast club, which contributes effectively to the development of their social skills and enjoyment of learning. Most pupils behave well. They are clear about school routines and do as they are told. Pupils are confident they can turn to an adult if they are worried or if there are incidents of bullying.

The vast majority of pupils know how to lead healthy and safe lives. They eat good, balanced lunches and enjoy physical activity. Pupils' contribution to the community is good. They act as playground friends; take on a good range of jobs to help the school run smoothly, and raise funds for local, national and international charities. They talk with knowledge about other faiths and reflect maturely on moral issues. On Remembrance Day the whole school sat quietly and very reverently for a minute to remember the war dead. The school council meets regularly and pupils are starting to take more of a lead in running their own meetings. Good standards in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare pupils well for the next stage of education. However, a few pupils are rather passive in their learning and wait to be told what to do.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Behaviour is managed well so classrooms are quiet, calm and industrious; this contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Most teachers use questions effectively to develop learning and sustain interest but expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. Teaching does not always encourage pupils to question, explore and take the initiative for their own learning. Lesson planning is detailed but the focus is sometimes on the activities rather than what the pupils are going to learn. As a result, pupils are not always clear about the purpose of the activity other than completing the task. The electronic whiteboards are used increasingly effectively to support learning and have a positive impact on the quality of lessons. Enthusiastic teachers and teaching assistants work well together, but teaching assistants are not always used effectively at the start and the end of lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school is implementing the revised frameworks for literacy and numeracy well. Appropriate strategies are in place to consolidate basic mathematical and linguistic skills in other lessons. The recently introduced 'creative learning journey' is enabling pupils to see the relevance of their learning as they link different subjects together around one theme. Pupils are encouraged to work together and take responsibilities within the group. For example, the 'Friend and Foe' project on World War II in Year 6 allowed pupils to use ICT and learn more about history and geography. Pupils are responding well to this initiative and enjoy their learning, particularly when it involves science, art and ICT activities.

The school provides pupils with a good range of activities and experiences to help their learning and promote their personal development. An interesting range of trips and visitors promotes safe and healthy living and helps pupils find out more about their local area. For example, pupils all learn about water safety through their visits to the nearby Lee Valley.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Parents happily deliver their children to school, confident that they are in good hands. Staff keep a close eye on break time activities to check energetic play does not get out of hand and become over boisterous. Staff work well with outside experts so they can help pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities to progress as well as their classmates. Links with external agencies to support these pupils are used well. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers set pupils targets to help them improve their work in English and mathematics. Pupils' work is marked on a regular basis. There are some good examples of developmental and informative marking in the English books but it is not as evident or consistent in other subjects. However, teachers are increasingly encouraging pupils to evaluate their own work and to identify for themselves the next steps in their learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher is enthusiastic and focused on introducing changes which will continue to improve standards and raise achievement. Subject leaders are developing as a team and carry out regular monitoring of their areas. They are starting to check that the impact of curriculum developments is having the desired effect on improving pupils' achievement. However, systems in all areas are not yet robust enough to identify key actions and support more rapid improvement. The school has a good range of data to help track pupils' progress and staff are becoming increasingly confident in using this information to identify any underachievement. The school is taking appropriate steps to promote community cohesion and to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other customs and cultures. Visits, visitors, topic work, charitable donations and links with other countries promote pupils' understanding of UK and global communities effectively. A significant number of parents feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their views.

Governors have satisfactory systems in place to monitor the work of the school but they do not all have sufficient knowledge of the school's performance. Nevertheless, the school is setting suitably challenging statutory targets in English and mathematics. Overall, the school has sound capacity for further improvement and provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

12 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brookland Junior School, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, EN8 0RX

This letter is to thank you for your help when my colleague and I visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our time with you. We were impressed by your good behaviour, your politeness, and how you care for each other and those who are less fortunate than you are. From talking to you and seeing you in lessons and around the school, we can tell you really enjoy being at school. You were trying hard in lessons and paying attention to your teachers. It was nice to see that your attendance is better than that found in many schools.

We think you go to a satisfactory school where you are able to undertake many interesting activities. Many of you told us how much you enjoy the topic or theme approach. The teachers have worked hard to reorganise the way they plan and teach the curriculum. They also make certain you are safe and learn about keeping healthy.

Most of you are reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The progress you make in your learning is satisfactory. However, we believe you could reach even higher standards, particularly in your writing. To help you, we have asked your headteacher to do some things to improve your school even more.

- To find more ways of raising your standards in writing through developing it in other subjects.
- To help your teachers to make sure you can do the best you can. You can play your part by always trying your best in all your lessons.
- To make sure that the senior teachers check very carefully what the school needs to do to improve.

Once again, thank you for making us so welcome.

With best wishes for the future

David Wynford Jones

Lead inspector