

Brookside Primary School

Rostherne Avenue, Great Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 2EE

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- From their starting points, not enough pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in their writing skills and knowledge, by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Teachers do not always make it clear what pupils are expected to do during lessons.
- Activities do not always challenge pupils, especially the more-able.
- The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent is above average.
- Pupils are not challenged to respond to guidance provided by their teachers as what to do next and what is expected of them to improve their work.
- Pupils need more opportunity to develop and use their writing and mathematical skills in all of their work.
- Leaders and managers do not focus closely enough on the link between pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently well to ensure high quality teaching across the school so that pupils do as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a very clear idea of the direction he wants the school to take. He is well-supported by his leadership team whose members share his determination to drive up standards.
- Some teaching is of good and outstanding quality; and assessment systems are now more robust.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that the children get off to a good start.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are highly positive, contributing to good behaviour in classrooms and around school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons. In addition, they observed the teaching of small groups of pupils receiving extra support for English and mathematics.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and to parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. They took account of 27 responses from parents to the on-line (Parent View) survey.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and five members of the Governing Body, staff members and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including those relating to child protection and safety, the school’s monitoring of teaching and school improvement.
- Inspectors heard four groups of pupils read and checked the school’s assessments of pupils’ progress in reading. They also looked at the school’s tracking system showing pupils’ progress in mathematics and English.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brookside Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional government funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The school has gained a number of awards, including: Eco-School Green Flag, Activemark Gold and a Wildlife Friendly Garden Award.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to that of the best so that it is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - sharing and learning from the outstanding practice in the school
 - providing more-able pupils with the right amount of challenge
 - ensuring that lessons are structured to allow pupils sufficient time to complete their work
 - ensuring that work is specifically planned and matched to the needs of all pupils so that they make maximum progress in lessons
 - providing opportunities for pupils to be involved in tasks independently and take more responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 to at least good in writing by :
 - providing more opportunities to engage in sustained writing
 - ensuring that there are regular and focused opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subjects
 - increasing the number of pupils who achieve the higher levels in the end-of-year assessments.
- Increase the impact that all leaders have on pupils' standards and progress by:
 - ensuring that when leaders check out classroom practice it is more sharply focused on pupil progress
 - subject leaders taking more responsibility for pupil achievement in their specific areas
 - ensuring that governors have a wider knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school to enable them to challenge the leadership more effectively.
- Continue to improve attendance, particularly for a small number of persistent absentees.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' overall achievement requires improvement. As pupils move up through the school, the progress they make varies; this is particularly the case at Key Stage 2. Progress in writing and mathematics requires improvement. The targets that pupils are expected to achieve are not ambitious enough to ensure more pupils make good progress, particularly the more-able pupils.
- By the end of Year 6, most pupils make the progress expected of them in reading from their individual starting points, but progress in writing and mathematics, particularly for more-able pupils is inconsistent.
- Overall progress from Year 3 to Year 6 is variable across year groups because of differences in the quality of teaching and pupils do not always build continuously on their skills as they move up from class to class.
- Achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics is variable from class to class. There were examples of good achievement in science, history and geography but this was not consistent in all classes.
- There are some good examples where pupils have the opportunity to connect their learning across subjects but opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and mathematical skills in a range of subjects are inconsistent.
- Children join the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and an increasing number are reaching above the standard expected for the start of Year 1.
- In 2012, pupils' standards and progress made by the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading is better than in writing and mathematics. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and know how to 'break words down' when they are unsure about new vocabulary. At Key Stage 1 pupils make good use of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. At Key Stage 2 pupils are enthusiastic readers and most read widely.
- Pupils who receive additional funding through pupil premium make the same progress as other pupils from their starting points both through additional support and opportunities to enhance their experiences. In 2012 those eligible for free school meals did less well than other pupils in English and mathematics tests at Key Stage 2. Current performance shows that the gap is narrowing for those entitled to the pupil premium.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are increasingly making good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, particularly in English.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good or better across the school. Teachers are committed to improving, engaging in training and implementing new ways of working. There are also examples of good and outstanding teaching within the school that provide models of what to aim for. However, these initiatives are too recent to have yet had their full impact on improving standards.
- The school has developed a good system to track the progress of pupils. At the moment this is not used consistently by teachers to help them in the planning of work for individual pupils. The planning of work for the more-able is sometimes the same as for other pupils which results in them not achieving the higher levels in the end of year tests.
- In some lessons teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough and the work

does not challenge all pupils, particularly the more-able. For example, in a small number of lessons pupils were given the same work to complete. Many pupils completed the tasks set very quickly and spent time, without further challenge from the teacher, waiting for the next instruction.

- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to explore learning for themselves and work independently of their teachers. This was particularly the case for more-able pupils who did not consistently make good progress in lessons.
- While pupils enjoy writing they do not get enough and consistent opportunity to engage in longer pieces of writing. Sometimes pupils are not clear about the skills and knowledge of writing which they are trying to develop.
- Marking has improved since the last inspection and teachers consistently follow the new system. They congratulate pupils on something done well and provide guidance on how to make their work even better. However, they do not always give pupils the time to respond to this good guidance.
- At times, the pace of pupils' learning is hampered when the structure of lessons does not provide pupils with enough time to complete their tasks. By contrast, the best lessons are well-structured and teachers make sure that learning moves on quickly. In a Year 1 lesson pupils developed some outstanding vocabulary in their exploration of poetry because of the support provided by the teacher and the time the pupils had to work independently.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. An interesting and wide range of activities is provided inside and outside the classroom. There is an effective blend of adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant and pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. This support is now closely focused so that pupils can be supported to make the progress that they should and all pupils have the same opportunities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave very well in and around the school; they are extremely courteous and welcoming to visitors. They routinely hold doors open for adults and each other.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and the majority attend regularly. The attendance of the minority of pupils whose attendance remains a concern is improving and the school has developed a range of strategies to ensure good attendance. The breakfast-club is a very good example of this. They value the well-attended breakfast-club which is helping support the attendance of a number of pupils. However, despite the school's best efforts an above average percentage of persistent absentees continues to result in attendance levels being below average overall.
- Pupils are proud of their school and would highly recommend Brookside to their friends.
- Pupils are keen to get on with their work and even when lessons were lacking stimulation they maintained their positive behaviour.
- Pupils take on a number of roles and responsibilities around the school including as school councillors. In so doing they learn about the democratic process and it also gives all pupils a voice in how the school develops. They are proud to help those less fortunate than themselves and raise money for local and global causes.
- As reading partners and playground buddies the older pupils show how they can support and help their teachers in the development of the younger children. As Eco-Warriors they show commitment and a mature approach to their environment.
- Pupils are unanimous in their rejection of bullying in any form. They say that the school teaches them about what forms bullying can take and the dangers of each. Pupils appreciate the emphasis the school places on their safety and happiness and make particular mention of the support they receive from adults when they have worries or are unhappy.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and agree that if they had any issues or concerns then any member of staff would listen and help them to sort out their problem.

- Parents are supportive of the school. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View questionnaire indicated that the school makes sure children are well-behaved and deals with bullying effectively.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Evaluation of information is not used sharply enough to set targets for improvement. For example, there is insufficient emphasis on the need to accelerate pupils' achievement and how improvements in teaching can bring this about.
- Subject leaders do not take sufficient responsibility for pupil achievement in their specific areas. Although they consistently check on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making in lessons, at the moment this does not result in improvement or ensure consistently good teaching and learning. Monitoring of lessons too often describes what is going on rather than emphasising the progress of different pupils.
- The headteacher has set a clear sense of purpose and direction. Leaders ensure a team approach and, as a result, all staff feel valued and included in bringing about change. The leadership team has brought about improvements to some areas and demonstrates the skills and determination to bring about the further improvement required.
- The school has available good and outstanding practice which has the potential to support improvements in the classroom, but as yet this has not been used to best effect to drive improvement in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Staff speak positively about performance management and the emphasis senior leaders place on improving teaching. They are equally as positive about the opportunities they have for professional development. The link between teachers' performance and their progression along the pay scale is in place.
- School leaders are working hard to improve achievement and strive to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. They develop and foster good relations between pupils of all levels of ability and from all cultures. There is zero tolerance for any form of discrimination. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully in place, regularly reviewed and meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders ensure that the school provides a varied and rich curriculum. There are some good examples of topic work but opportunities to develop basic skills, particularly writing, are not always planned to ensure pupils maximise their progress.
- Leaders are greatly committed to provide the pupils with a rich school experience. The school provides significant enrichment in the curriculum and a whole range of extra activities. Residential visits, visits to Chester Zoo, museums and galleries and frequent visitors to the school are greatly appreciated by the pupils. Pupils further benefit from the richness of the school grounds that provide them with opportunities to explore nature.
- The school has good links with a range of partners and is committed to ensuring that these partnerships benefit the pupils of Brookside.
- The local authority works closely with the school. While the local authority is confident that the current leadership team can achieve the improvements required, current support lacks focus in response to the main issues for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are regular visitors to the school. They ensure that performance management of teachers takes place and targets are linked to salary progression but recognise that these are not currently sharp enough. Governors make sure that money, including the pupil premium funding, is used well to benefit the pupils who are entitled to it. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. They take part in any additional training that will help them carry out their duties. However, at the moment they are not appropriately informed about the quality of teaching and the progress that all groups of pupils are making and could do more to hold school leaders to account.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131956
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	411817

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Newman
Headteacher	Mr M Rodgers
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2010
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