

Brambleside Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130963
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	315680
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Parker
Headteacher	Sue Peel
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Cleveland Avenue Kettering NN16 9JG
Telephone number	01536 310680
Fax number	01536 310681

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than many primary schools and is oversubscribed. Most pupils come from the local community. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is very low indeed and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has been awarded Artsmark, Activemark and is an Eco school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Despite recent improvements, the school is not providing an adequate education for its pupils. Significant improvements are required to the provision in Key Stage 2, including teaching and learning and the curriculum, and pupils' achievement and standards in Key Stage 2. Taken together, pupils make a very good start in the Reception classes and Key Stage 1 and achieve well. This good beginning is not effectively built on in Key Stage 2. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is inadequate because of weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. In the recent past, achievement had been good in English and satisfactory in science but achievement has slowed significantly in the current school year. The school is aware that pupils are now not making sufficient progress in their writing, mathematics and science lessons. The school had correctly identified that progress in mathematics was too slow in 2006 and 2007. There are early signs of improvements in standards and achievement in mathematics as a result of placing children in sets according to ability and introducing more consistency to the way calculations are taught but there is still some way to go. All pupils are taught in mixed age classes and there are significant differences between the rates of progress of pupils in different age groups, classes and subjects. Overall progress is too inconsistent. Although many pupils reach average standards, their achievement is not good enough, as they are capable of so much more. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory because they are well supported by skilled teaching assistants who cater well for their needs. Teaching and learning are outstanding in the Reception classes and good in Key Stage 1 but there is too much inadequate teaching and not enough good teaching in Key Stage 2. The pace of lessons is good in Key Stage 1 but is too slow in Key Stage 2. Pupils often do not complete enough work and are unable to effectively practise skills and reinforce learning because teachers talk for too long during introductions to lessons. Work is often not well matched to pupils' abilities and expectations are too low, which particularly hampers the progress of the more able pupils. Senior leaders are aware that the school's system of tracking focused too much on standards rather than achievement and resulted in the school being slow to identify where pupils' progress was not good enough and to hold teachers to account. There is an outstanding curriculum in the Reception classes and a good curriculum in Key Stage 1 that meets pupils' needs and interests well. However, the curriculum in Key Stage 2 is inadequate because it does not build on what pupils have already learned and is not challenging enough. It is not designed to cope with mixed age classes, and pupils often repeat work. Enrichment of the curriculum is very good indeed and pupils have wonderful opportunities to become involved in the arts. Strong partnerships with the local community successfully extend the opportunities available to pupils, particularly in music and sport. This helps pupils to develop well socially and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Eco school activities are enjoyed by the pupils and provide good opportunities for them to contribute to the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are consistently good and pupils are well cared for throughout the school. This results in pupils' feeling very safe, secure and happy. Good personal and social education has ensured that pupils know how to keep healthy and safe and has also further improved pupils' good behaviour. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The headteacher is determined that the school should quickly recover from this dip in standards and achievements. She is passionate about the school and her work has

underpinned pupils' good personal development and their access to exciting and enjoyable extra activities. There has been extensive monitoring of teaching and learning but it has not been rigorous enough and has not always precisely pinpointed the weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum. Nevertheless, the school's self-evaluation and development planning are satisfactory and improving as the school begins to recognise where its weaknesses lie and makes sensible plans to improve the situation. Achievement in mathematics is getting better. Leadership of Key Stage 2 is being strengthened, and increasingly effective leadership in science is starting to improve provision for science.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents are delighted with provision in the Reception classes. They recognise 'a sense of care and happiness' and say that their children really enjoy their time at school. Most children enter Reception with skills that are above the expectations for their age, particularly in their personal and social development, although their skills in communication, language and literacy are closer to what is normally expected. They make very good progress through the Reception classes because of outstanding teaching combined with an exciting curriculum. Opportunities to learn through play are carefully planned and are very well matched to children's needs and interests; the outdoor area is used extremely well to provide stimulating activities that grab the attention of young children. The range of activities includes those that appeal to boys as well as girls and there are ample opportunities for children to work on linking sounds and letters and to develop their writing skills. Adult support is of a very high quality and staff work extremely hard to develop children's thinking skills and their language and vocabulary. Assessment is used very well to chart pupils' progress. Very good management has resulted in consistently high quality practice. As a result, pupils leave the Reception classes with standards well above national expectations in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate achievement in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, paying particular attention to the achievement of more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, ensuring that lessons have sufficient pace, activities are well matched to pupils' needs and there are enough opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Ensure that the curriculum for Key Stage 2 builds on what pupils have already learned and is sufficiently challenging
- Improve the rigour of the monitoring of teaching and learning, including using data more effectively to track pupils' progress and hold teachers to account.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is outstanding in the Reception classes and good in Key Stage 1, but it is inadequate in Key Stage 2. When pupils enter Year 1, their standards are above national expectations. They continue to make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are well above average in reading and writing and mathematics, with a good proportion of pupils reaching the higher end of Level 3. In 2007, standards were above average in Key Stage 2 and pupils had made good progress in English and satisfactory progress in science. The school was aware that achievement in mathematics was inadequate in 2007 and too few pupils were

reaching the higher levels in mathematics and science. The school recognises that there have been some recent improvements to achievement and standards in mathematics but pupils' problem-solving skills still need to be improved. However, overall progress in Key Stage 2 has slowed and standards dipped so that they are now no more than average. Some parents are unhappy with provision in the mixed age classes, and they recognise that their children have been 'coasting'. The pupils' progress varies widely between classes. Many pupils produce insufficient written work in English and science and their progress is too slow. As a result, pupils are not always reaching the standards of which they are capable. Parents have correctly identified that more able pupils need more challenge as too many are not reaching their full potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have been actively involved in creating the school rules and have a sense of ownership and pride in the school. The active school council and the work of the Eco committee ensure that pupils make a good contribution to the school community. Pupils treat each other very well indeed. Good behaviour and good manners are very evident and there is a very calm atmosphere in school. Pupils say there is very little bullying and when they do have concerns, they are taken seriously. Pupils try hard in lessons and they want to do well. They take little time off school and attendance rates are well above average. Pupils usually enjoy school very much, especially lessons in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and the extra activities, including sport and music. They often stay engaged even in the less exciting lessons in Key Stage 2 but boys are more likely than girls to 'drift off' during overly long introductions to lessons. Even though the boys continue to behave well, their learning slows and this restricts their progress as they have insufficient opportunities to be actively involved in learning. Pupils like to keep active and eat healthily; they know well how to keep safe. They have good opportunities to learn about commercial ventures through the school's link with a play equipment manufacturer. Good attitudes to work, regular attendance and the ability to work well together, combined with average standards in English, mathematics and science bode well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stage 1, but are inadequate in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, there is a brisk pace to lessons, activities are well matched to pupils' needs and there is good use of questioning to take learning forward. Expectations are high, resulting in good achievement. However, in Key Stage 2, there is too much inadequate and satisfactory teaching and not enough good teaching, resulting in pupils making unsatisfactory progress. Occasionally lessons are exciting and innovative and pupils are enthused and learn well but in many lessons, the pace is too slow. Activities are not sufficiently well planned to meet pupils' needs; expectations of academic standards and presentation of work are often too low. Pupils listen patiently to teachers' long introductions to lessons but often there is insufficient time for pupils to work independently and to make gains in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is outstanding in the Reception classes and good in Key Stage 1, but it is inadequate in Key Stage 2. Parents are right to be concerned about provision in Key Stage 2 as the curriculum is not adequately planned to tackle the needs of mixed age classes and as a result, pupils sometimes repeat work and there are gaps in their learning. The lack of progression and challenge holds back achievement. Setting by ability in mathematics has brought about some improvements to achievement but work still needs to be more precisely matched to the range of pupils' abilities within the set. Opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning are developing well. There are more chances for pupils to take part in science investigations in some classes. However, there is still not enough challenge in the curriculum for more able pupils. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors helps make learning more interesting and relevant. Good links with other local schools have enhanced pupils' opportunities, particularly to take part in sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

High quality pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and personal development. The school provides an attractive physical environment where pupils feel safe and secure. Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust. The school works efficiently with external agencies to provide extra help for vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. The quality of academic guidance is very variable. It is consistently good in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2, the quality of marking varies from very good to inadequate. For example, some science books are very well marked and even the most able pupils are told clearly how to improve their work, but the marking of science work in some other classes is cursory and offers no advice about to improve. The use of targets is variable and some pupils' targets in Key Stage 2 are not challenging enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management is outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stage 1. Less experienced staff have been encouraged to develop their skills and have benefited from useful guidance. The management of Key Stage 2 has been less effective but is beginning to be strengthened, using the good practice that has been developed in Key Stage 1. The quality of subject leadership is variable. It is good in some subjects such as science and ICT where issues have been accurately identified and there has already been action to improve provision. However, it is less effective in other subjects where subject leaders, although enthusiastic, lack the necessary skills and experience to quickly bring about change. Subject leaders are not yet fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, including the analysis of data. Targets are sometimes set too low, contributing to low expectations and the underachievement of more able pupils. Although governors are supportive, they do not always analyse data effectively, thus limiting their ability to challenge the school.

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?	4
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

2 July 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of Brambleside Community Primary School, Kettering NN16 9JG Thank you for being so welcoming and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you. We are pleased that you like school because it is so friendly and staff look after you well. You told us that you are happy in school and especially enjoy the gardening club and the sport and music. You are lucky to have such wonderful choirs and such good opportunities to learn a musical instrument. At the moment, your school is not providing you with a satisfactory education, but the staff at your school are trying hard to improve the situation. We have given your school a Notice to Improve. This means that inspectors will come back in about six months to check that you are getting a better quality of education. Children in the Reception class are involved in very exciting activities and make terrific progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are making good progress because of good teaching combined with interesting things to do. We know that most of you work hard. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 are not making enough progress. We have asked your teachers to improve pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and to make sure that more able pupils do better. I know that some of your parents have been concerned about mixed age classes in Key Stage 2 and we agree that the planning for lessons needs to improve so that you are no longer repeating some topics and missing out on others. We have also asked your teachers to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, including making introductions shorter so you have more time to work independently, making sure that the work is not too easy and making lessons move along at a faster pace. Managers in your school are working very hard to make your school much better and your school is already starting to improve. We have asked them to make careful checks on your learning so that they can quickly spot if you are starting to fall behind and are able to identify where teaching is not moving your learning on properly. Thank you again for being such good company. I wish you well for the future. Yours sincerely Susan Walsh Lead Inspector

Annex B



2 July 2008

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Inspection of Brambleside Community Primary School, Kettering NN16 9JG

Thank you for being so welcoming and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you. We are pleased that you like school because it is so friendly and staff look after you well. You told us that you are happy in school and especially enjoy the gardening club and the sport and music. You are lucky to have such wonderful choirs and such good opportunities to learn a musical instrument.

At the moment, your school is not providing you with a satisfactory education, but the staff at your school are trying hard to improve the situation. We have given your school a Notice to Improve. This means that inspectors will come back in about six months to check that you are getting a better quality of education.

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Managers in your school are working very hard to make your school much better and your school is already starting to improve. We have asked them to make careful checks on your learning so that they can quickly spot if you are starting to fall behind and are able to identify where teaching is not moving your learning on properly.

Thank you again for being such good company. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh
Lead Inspector