

Brunton First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135286
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	360715
Inspection dates	15–16 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Val Hay
Headteacher	Mrs Gill McKay
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, saw three teachers, held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and parents and spoke to pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised 62 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether school leaders have implemented initiatives that have securely established the effectiveness of the school and that will ensure school improvement.
- Whether, in the absence of nationally accredited data, pupils' attainment is at least above average and pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching.

Information about the school

This school is very much smaller than others of the same type. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupil is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status. The school opened in September 2009 with children in the Reception class and Year 1. Currently, there are pupils in the Reception class, Year 1 and Year 2.

A private charitable organisation provides out-of-school care in the form of a breakfast and an after-school club, which will be inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. An outstanding commitment to community cohesion has enabled the headteacher to rapidly and effectively establish the school at the heart of a new community. There are outstanding outcomes for pupils who demonstrate good achievement, exemplary behaviour, an exceptional awareness of how to stay fit and healthy, and make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. All staff provide exceptionally sensitive care and support, including outstanding application of safeguarding procedures, which ensure that pupils flourish, are happy and feel extremely safe. There are outstanding procedures to involve parents and carers in their children's learning, so that progress is enhanced at home. Pupils make good progress because good teaching makes learning fun and the effective curriculum offers many stimulating experiences, including through outstanding partnerships, to enhance pupils' enterprise, sporting and artistic skills. In lessons which are consistently good, teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how to know if they have succeeded. Occasionally, they do not ask sufficiently challenging questions and pupils have too little time to explore for themselves, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While pupils enjoy and make good progress in their writing, there are too few opportunities for them to write at length in subjects across the curriculum.

Pupils have an exceptionally strong sense of how to help others, an extremely clear understanding of other faiths and awareness of life in different cultures. This understanding, together with the school's development of pupils' interest in the historical and artistic richness of the local area, enhances pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Above average attainment and high attendance, allied to highly developed skills in enterprise activities, teamwork and in information and communication technology (ICT) contribute to pupils being exceptionally well prepared, even at this early stage, for their lives beyond school.

The school has much useful information about pupils' skills and abilities which it uses well to identify and match work to the learning needs of individual pupils and to measure their progress. Marking is also used effectively to tell pupils how well they have achieved in individual tasks and how to improve their work. Self-evaluation is accurate and includes all staff and members of the governing body in planning and monitoring. As a result, the school has initiated appropriate and successful strategies which have rapidly established its effectiveness, ensure that it provides good value for money and its capacity to improve is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2012, further accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, by:

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- – ensuring pupils have sufficient opportunities to explore independently and together, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- – using questions more effectively so that teachers encourage pupils to extend their thinking
- – offering more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their work is good. Pupils have excellent attitudes, are extremely courteous, form very positive relationships and show great eagerness to do well in their work. In lessons they especially enjoy challenging and exciting activities, such as art projects linked to visits to local landmarks, using ICT to research about animals and their habitats or experimenting to discover how nocturnal animals find their food.

Children have a wide range of ability when they start school, but overall their skills on entry to Reception are in line with those expected for their age. Although no nationally accredited data exist for the school, pupils' work and the school's own assessment data indicate that pupils make good progress from their starting points to attain standards which are above average for pupils in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their work provides appropriate challenge and interest and they are well cared for and supported in their learning.

Pupils are exceptionally aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in the high take-up of healthy school meals and their very enthusiastic involvement in physical education. They care for one another very well, have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel extremely safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils make a highly positive contribution to the school community through the school council. This meets regularly and has played a major role in arranging fund-raising events, purchasing and organising playground equipment and helping to choose their new teachers. They support a range of charities and participate in activities with the local churches, elderly residents and businesses. High attendance rates, excellent punctuality, involvement in enterprise activities and confidence in group work, mean that pupils are exceptionally well equipped for their future economic well-being.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers employ interactive whiteboard technology well to engage pupils and plan opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, including experiments, games and using ICT. They make learning fun, make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. Occasionally, the pace of learning drops because introductory activities go on for too long and pupils are prevented from getting on with tasks or exploring independently or together. Teachers use questions well to ascertain what pupils already know and check that they have made progress. Occasionally, they use questions less successfully to challenge pupils to further extend their thinking.

The curriculum contributes to pupils' good progress by offering a range of stimulating activities which are based on their own interests and help them to develop and apply skills in mathematics, research and experimentation. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their writing in subjects across the curriculum. There are good procedures to develop pupils' reading and spelling skills and their understanding of how to link sounds and letters. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to Alnwick Castle and the Angel of the North, and opportunities to work with storytellers and people from different faiths and professions, help to develop pupils' skills in writing, art and history and their understanding of other faiths and cultures. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting, cultural and

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environmental activities, including multi-skills, French and the development of the school garden.

All staff have an extremely detailed knowledge about the personal and emotional needs of individual pupils so that they are exceptionally well cared for and they develop self-esteem, respect and a sense of responsibility. Highly effective practices involve parents and carers when their children enter school and move from class to class. Parents and carers say that this was particularly evident when the school first opened. Staff ensured that children settled quickly and that parents and carers rapidly gained confidence in the way the school meets their children's needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly respected headteacher has rigorously and skilfully implemented strategies which are grounded in a clear vision of how schools develop to establish an effective school at the heart of a new community. Very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, she has appointed and developed an enthusiastic staff team who are excited by the challenges afforded in a new school. Accordingly, all staff welcome opportunities to contribute to decision making, the school improvement plan and the development of key areas of the curriculum. There are effective systems for tracking progress and monitoring the effectiveness of teaching. The governing body has been instrumental in the successful establishment of the school, offers good support and challenge and has developed effective procedures to monitor learning.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are outstanding, as all aspects meet government requirements and are rigorously monitored and reviewed. They also ensure that pupils are safe among the potential hazards of the roads and building sites around the school. The school has exceptionally effective links with outside agencies, including international businesses and the local care home, to develop learning opportunities. There is a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. Parents and carers have been regularly consulted about the development of the school and have responded by supporting the school in fundraising activities. They are very closely involved in promoting their children's learning at home, are kept well informed of what pupils are learning and about their progress. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is extremely strong and there are excellent links with the emergent local community. Pupils have a very clear understanding of Great Britain as a diverse, multicultural society and of life in other countries, because

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the school celebrates the diversity which is afforded by the few children from different cultural backgrounds who attend the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry to Reception are least well developed in linking sounds and letters and calculation. Effective teaching, which is skilfully directed to develop skills in calculating, speaking and listening, and linking sounds and letters, helps children to make good progress from their starting points. Children enjoy creative and research activities such as painting and imaginative play and experimenting to find out how quickly they can cycle. The teacher offers children many interesting activities which are specifically linked to learning goals. Children organise their own learning around umbrella themes, although some opportunities are missed for children to choose their own learning. There are effective procedures to manage and modify the behaviours of a few children who find learning difficult.

Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are rigorously met and encourage children to assess risks themselves. A range of healthy snacks, milk and drinking water, opportunities for exercise, and clear guidelines for hand-washing, all help children to develop an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy.

Effective leadership ensures that teaching is good because it is securely based on the knowledge of how young children learn and develop. Observations and assessments are used effectively to support and extend children's learning and identify areas for improvement. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and carers that enable children to settle quickly into the Reception class and develop as confident and caring individuals. The learning journals, in particular, help parents and carers to understand how well their children are progressing.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was well above average for a school of this type. The respondents support the school and its leaders extremely strongly with almost all being happy with their child's experience at school and all aspects of its work. They particularly support the way the school has rapidly established itself, the effectiveness of its leadership team, the credence it gives to their own views and the care it takes of their children. The inspection findings reflect these very positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brunton First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	89	7	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	89	6	10	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	68	19	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	79	12	19	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	84	10	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	76	15	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	79	13	21	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	58	18	29	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	76	15	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	63	17	27	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	58	22	35	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	87	8	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	89	7	11	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brunton First School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE13 9BD

Thank you so much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a good school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and clubs. You behave exceptionally well, show great respect for one another and look after one another admirably. We were particularly impressed by how safe you feel, how much you know about leading a healthy life and the way you are involved in helping to raise money to improve the school and for charities.

We were extremely impressed by how hard you work in lessons and by your friendliness. You are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your lessons and how excited you are to be the first pupils in a new school. Your parents and carers like the school very much. Your teachers try hard to make your lessons fun and all staff care for you exceptionally well. Your teachers also know what to do to make the school even better. They have agreed with me that they should do the following things to help your school to improve even more:

- give you more opportunities to investigate and experiment together
- help you to develop your writing skills by allowing more opportunities for you to write at length in all of your subjects
- ask you more challenging questions that will help you to think for yourselves.

You can help by continuing to do your best and keeping up your excellent attendance. We wish you every success in the future as you and your school grow together.

Yours sincerely

Mr Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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