

Bowsland Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130257
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	360121
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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 of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Banfield
Headteacher	Clare Whitaker
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
School address	Ellicks Close Bristol BS32 0ES
Telephone number	01454 866766
Fax number	01454 866765
Email address	bowslandgreenprimary.school@southglos.gov.uk

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Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They also talked to some parents and carers who were present at the start and finish of the school day. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its improvement plan, minutes of the governing body meetings, data on pupils' progress, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and a range of school policies. They also analysed questionnaires received from 176 parents and carers and 126 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Pupils' attainment and progress in science.
- How well the teaching takes account of the needs of different groups of pupils, and how well this helps all pupils to improve their attainment and progress.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in motivating and inspiring all pupils and providing challenge and interest for them.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders and the governing body in checking attainment, progress and the quality of teaching, and their contribution to school improvement.

Information about the school

This school is similar in size to most other primary schools. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and just over one fifth of all pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than is typically found. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties. The school has Healthy School Status and there is a breakfast club managed by the governing body. A Sure Start Centre is attached to the school, which is managed 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, where pupils make good progress in most of their lessons and attainment is rising. One parent reflected the views of many by saying, 'This is a fantastic school, warm and friendly and my children love coming here.'

A major reason for the school's success is the drive and ambition of the headteacher, which is shared by all staff and the governing body. The quality of teaching and learning has gone from strength to strength under her exceptionally good coaching and mentoring. School self-evaluation is accurate and, most importantly, the school knows exactly what to do further to sustain its journey towards excellence. This, together with the successful action leaders have taken to ensure improvement since the last inspection, means the capacity to improve further is good.

Pupils are right to be proud of Bowsland Primary School and relish all it has to offer. A very positive atmosphere permeates the school and relationships are exceptionally strong. Consequently, pupils have a high regard both for their classmates and for the adults who work with them. Pupils have an excellent understanding for their age as to how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. Their joy of school is strongly evident in the ever-improving attendance rate, which is very high.

Pupils join the school with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, but are below those expected in writing and reading. By the end of Year 6, attainment has risen and is above average. This represents good achievement from pupils' starting points. In 2009, the school was in the top 7 per cent of schools in the country for the progress pupils made. Key to this success is the introduction of rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the personal development and well-being of each pupil and their progress towards challenging academic targets. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, and often very good, progress. The attainment and progress of some high attaining pupils, however, especially in science, is not as good as it could be.

One of the reasons for the school's strong improvement in recent years is its exciting and well-planned curriculum that brings together topics and subjects to enliven learning and make it relevant and engaging. Lessons are typically well taught so pupils are fully encouraged to learn. Marking is regular and helpful but does not always inform pupils well enough how they can do even better.

Subject leaders are enthusiastic and are growing well into their roles. However, they are not as accountable for standards, progress and care in their respective areas as they should be. The governing body supports the school well and plays a key role in promoting effective safeguarding and good links with parents and carers. However, they have yet to evaluate the work of the school fully and systematically or to play an active part in setting

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school priorities. The school's promotion of community cohesion has focused on the school community which is entirely harmonious and totally cohesive. Links with people in the local community and with communities beyond the school are not as strong as they could be.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of higher attaining pupils in science by providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their investigation skills.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and managers, by:
 - ensuring that all middle managers are consistently accountable for pupils' attainment and progress in the subjects for which they are responsible
 - building on the individual skills and expertise of members of the governing body to ensure they play a robust and strong role in shaping the strategic direction of the school.
- Extend the school's work on promoting community cohesion by increasing the opportunities for pupils to become more actively involved in local issues and by developing links with communities nationally and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils greatly enjoy school, grow in confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning. The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms an overall picture of consistently good progress. All pupils achieve equally well because most teachers expect much of their pupils and explain complicated ideas well. In an exciting and imaginative numeracy lesson in Year 6, pupils were learning at a rapid pace because they were captivated by the challenging and enjoyable tasks the teacher set for them. The school is very conscious of the needs of all pupils and so there is very little difference in the progress made by most groups of pupils. For example, the work draws on the interests of both boys and girls and the school works very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment. Detailed plans to support these groups, coupled with thoughtful deployment of learning assistants and timely interventions, ensure that they make similar progress to their classmates. Too few pupils, however, are working at the higher levels in science, where their ability to investigate science topics is not well enough developed.

Pupils' well-developed understanding of right and wrong is reflected in their good, and often impeccable, behaviour around the school. They are lively and questioning, and were keen to engage inspectors in conversation about their school. Pupils eagerly explain the value of adopting healthy lifestyles and the need for exercise, and have an excellent understanding for their age of how to be safe in school and the wider community. They take advantage of the many opportunities to participate in the school community and are well informed about other people's needs. Pupils develop good social and interpersonal skills and relish working collaboratively. This, together with above average standards in the key skills in English and mathematics, means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

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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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Pupils are known to staff as individuals. Their learning, personal development and well-being are monitored rigorously and their needs are very well met by very carefully targeted support. Starting in Reception, the school works closely with families, children and a range of agencies to sustain the academic and personal development of pupils facing challenging circumstances. As a result, behaviour and attendance have improved substantially and vulnerable pupils progress as well as their peers. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is especially strong and helps them to make good, and sometimes excellent, progress. The curriculum contributes positively to pupils' good learning and personal development. Carefully and imaginatively planned themes with strong links between subjects have successfully motivated and enthused pupils and have done much to increase their confidence as learners. Well-supported, creative and educational activities outside the normal school day, including the well-attended breakfast club, make a valuable contribution to pupils' high levels of enjoyment. The school recognises that the curriculum does too little to foster a good understanding of communities beyond the school.

Teachers are confident and knowledgeable and create a well-ordered and calm environment. Typically, lessons are fast-paced and fun. Teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained, and activities are carefully designed to challenge the pupils

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to learn at a swift pace. Adults ask perceptive questions and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers. Effective use of 'talking partners', drama, role play and letter and sounds (phonics) activities help pupils make rapid progress in their speaking and writing. Where teaching falls short of outstanding, opportunities are missed to ensure pupils are learning actively and independently enough. In a few lessons, teachers do not challenge pupils through active learning matched sharply to their abilities. The school has set up thorough systems to check on pupils' progress and these are now used consistently well to ensure that none is in danger of falling behind and to enable teachers to set the next steps for each pupil's learning. This is not, however, always made explicit in teachers' marking of pupils' work.

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 headteacher provides highly effective leadership and works tenaciously to improve pupils' educational opportunities. She communicates her high expectations persuasively to staff. With strong support from her governing body, senior and middle leaders, she has set a precise path for improvement based on accurate self-evaluation and by embedding initiatives which have begun to make a positive difference to pupils' achievements. Leaders are quick to recognise and praise the good work of staff and pupils and are alert to situations where they need more advice and guidance. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress is accelerating. There is no hint of complacency and there is a determination from staff at all levels to sustain and build upon the many recent gains. In this way, the school promotes equality for all pupils and makes sure there is no discrimination on any grounds. Middle leaders are eager to take real accountability for their respective areas but have too little responsibility for monitoring attainment and the quality of teaching and learning, and this is holding back improvements in pupils' achievement in some subjects, especially science.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. It fulfils all legal requirements and gives good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff. All safeguarding arrangements were found to be effective at the time of the inspection. Good practice in safeguarding and child protection is evident in all areas of the school's work. The governing body have a wealth of relevant experience which assists the school. They are very supportive but are insufficiently involved in prioritising plans for improving the school, and their approach to evaluating the effectiveness of some policies and procedures is not yet rigorous enough.

In this highly inclusive school, every child matters and individual needs are considered very specifically. The school works well in partnership with external agencies to secure

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extra support for those pupils who need it. While there are good features in the school's existing work on promoting community cohesion, in the school itself for example, the school is aware that some elements have yet to be developed more fully. It is planning to forge links with groups in the local community and with schools overseas, and enhance other aspects of this work across the curriculum.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle into the Reception unit quickly. They are keen to learn, play together happily and are well behaved. Staff provide very well for children's welfare and have created a safe, attractive environment in which the needs of all children are fully met. Teaching is good and so children make good progress from their differing starting points. This is because a team of well-qualified adults support the children skilfully by asking focused questions to develop their understanding. There is a good balance of activities led by adults and those from which children can choose. Children are developing good social skills because they are making choices and fostering independence through working with others. All adults make observations of children and carefully assess their learning. However, this information is not always used rigorously enough to ensure that next steps in learning are sharply focused. By the end of their Reception Year, most children are working securely towards the levels expected for their age in most areas. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership to his team. He has a very secure understanding of the Early Years curriculum and constantly reviews his practice to ensure that all children receive high quality care and support.

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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:	
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 school and its headteacher clearly enjoy the confidence and support of those parents and carers who returned the questionnaire. A number of individual comments reflected the high quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the good progress made by pupils. The few criticisms were followed up as inspection trails during the visit. For instance, a small minority of parents and carers raised concerns regarding the extent to which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found, through discussion with a wide range of pupils, through lesson observations and through observation of pupils at breaktime and at lunchtime, that their behaviour overall was good. The views of the parents and carers interviewed informally at the end of the school day confirm the positive responses in the questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bowsland Green Primary 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 inspection team received 176 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	114	65	54	31	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	118	67	53	30	4	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	57	32	95	54	12	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	36	87	49	10	6	5	3
The teaching is good at this school	85	48	79	45	5	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	36	93	53	9	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	44	92	52	3	2	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)	69	39	79	45	9	5	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	41	83	47	10	6	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	39	78	44	14	8	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	31	83	47	14	8	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	86	49	78	44	4	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	98	56	65	37	9	5	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bowsland Green Primary School, Bristol BS32 0ES

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. What a lovely two days we had! We enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Bowsland Primary is a good school which is improving quickly. It has many good features and you are right to be proud of your school. Here are some of the good things we found out about it.

- Your personal development is good. You behave well around the school and in your classes and you look after each other so well. You relish working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult.
- You make good progress as you move through the school and your achievement is getting better all the time. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards that are now higher than those in most other schools. This is because of the good teaching which you receive and also because you work hard.
- Your teachers and other adults take excellent care of you. You told us they make sure that everyone feels safe and secure.
- Your headteacher, the governing body and all the other staff know in detail how to make sure that your school continues to improve.

To help them to do this, we have asked your school to do the following:

- Ensure that more of you make faster progress in science so that you reach higher levels in Year 6 by giving you more opportunities to carry out your own investigations.
- Make sure that the teachers who are responsible for subjects check on how well you are taught and how well you are doing and for the school governors to play a bigger part in helping the school get better.
- Give you more opportunities to become more involved in the life of the local community and gain understanding of communities further afield.

I am sure that you will help them by always working hard and aiming really high.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant Lead inspector

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