

Belvedere Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101438
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	354996
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr. Margaret O'Neill
Headteacher	Linda Mulley
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 24 lessons taught by 10 staff. They observed the school's work, looked at school documentation and pupils' workbooks, and held discussions with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and senior staff. Questionnaires from 60 parents and carers and 15 staff were analysed to help inform the inspection process.

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

- Inspectors examined whether the recent rise in pupils' attainment is being sustained, particularly in their writing.
- They explored how well teaching caters for those who are more able and in promoting pupils' computer skills.
- The team considered how the curriculum is helping widen pupils' understanding of others, particularly those living much further from the school.
- It explored whether the school has been successful in raising pupils' attendance levels.

Information about the school

This larger-than-average-sized infant school serves a culturally diverse community. Approximately 85% of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, with pupils of African, Indian or Pakistani heritage forming the largest proportions. Approximately 28 different languages are spoken by pupils. Around 28% of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities which is above average, as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals is higher than the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and three Reception classes. The school has gained Healthy Schools status. The previous Nursery building was demolished recently and building work is currently underway to replace it. Nursery children are temporarily being taught within the main school building. As a consequence, a Year 2 class is being taught in the school library area. The outside areas which were provided particularly for Nursery children have been unavailable since the building work commenced.

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. Parents and carers particularly value the good levels of care, guidance and support which help pupils to feel secure, happy and well-behaved. At the heart of the school is a clear focus upon individual needs and aspirations of pupils, guided and fostered well by senior leaders, the governing body and supportive staff. These positive approaches promote harmonious relationships between pupils with differing backgrounds or beliefs. Pupils' good attitudes to learning are a clear basis for recent rises in pupils' attainment. Although pupils enjoy attending the school, attendance levels have only just edged up to satisfactory because of the school's efforts. There are still too many occasions, however, when attendance for a small number of pupils falls short of the norm because some parents and carers do not ensure their regular attendance.

Children have a good start to school life and, although recent disruptions have reduced some of their access to outdoor spaces, those in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy learning and feel secure as their welfare needs are catered for effectively. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has risen and last year's national results were the highest for some time. Pupils' current attainment in writing, mathematics and scientific skills reflect broadly average levels, but their speaking, listening and reading skills are often better than expected. Teaching, although generally good through the school, is not always consistently so. Teachers develop good relationships with pupils and plan lots of practical activities during lessons. These are usually interesting and pitched well to pupils' interests and ages, but those that are more able are not always stretched to their full capabilities. Some activities, while interesting, do not fully exploit the creative potential of pupils. In other subjects, including music, art, and information and communication technology (ICT), pupils achieve well. Pupils' improved levels of basic skills and success in other subjects are clear factors in ensuring most, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities, make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave the school. This is an improved picture from the last inspection.

There is a clear drive and ambition to continue raising pupils' attainment and progress while keeping pupils' personal well-being to the fore. A close eye is kept on pupils' progress and is paying dividends in terms of raising pupils' attainment. Support for all pupils, but particularly those who are potentially vulnerable, is targeted to good effect. Relationships with parents and carers are good. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weakness through clear, regular self-evaluation routines. As a result, improvements in key subjects are now secure. Some areas such as reducing gender differences in pupils' progress, which vary slightly from subject to subject, are already on the school's 'must do' list to reduce further. The rebuilding of the Nursery is another 'plus factor' in improving pupils' experiences. These factors all indicate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and pupils' learning through the school in the coming academic year by:
 - ensuring that work is closely matched to the abilities of pupils, particularly for those who are more able
 - extending pupils' learning in the Reception classes, when they are working in small groups or alone on activities
 - asking more open-ended questions of pupils to extend their learning
 - planning more innovative activities to capitalise on pupils' natural curiosity.
- Work with the small number of parents and carers who find it difficult to send their children to school regularly, to raise attendance levels further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' good achievement, from below average attainment levels when they start school, is the result of the good combination of their personal abilities aiding their academic confidence. Good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development mean pupils have good attitudes to learning. Nearly all pupils benefit from daily physical 'peer massage', which helps relax them after busy lunchtimes and sets them up well for afternoon learning. Pupils' writing has improved recently. For example, Year 1 pupils particularly liked the idea of aliens landing in school and took delight in writing about them. In a poetry-based assembly, pupils enjoyed reciting poems to classmates and parents. In a Year 2 lesson about learning to tell the time, pupils accurately sequenced times when they woke up, washed, ate breakfast and went to school. Only in activities which are occasionally too easy for some or require simple completion of tasks does pupils' attention wander. Variations between boys' and girls' attainment, noted in national tests, were not evident in day-to-day work. Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve well in line with all other pupils. Pupils' skills in ICT develop systematically to the levels expected, as does their scientific knowledge, despite not always being recorded to the best effect so they can review what they have learnt. For some individuals with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress has been excellent because of very close identification of their needs and specific academic, emotional or social programmes provided for them.

The school council, aided by pupils having simple responsibilities around the school, contribute to initiatives such as changes to school rules. The pupils voiced their good sense of safety to inspectors, citing the willingness of staff to help and guide them. Contributions to local community life and visits further afield help develop their sense of responsibility and knowledge of other places. Playtimes are active, aided by a good variety of play equipment available, and pupils say they try to eat healthily, and are proud of achieving their Healthy Schools award. Given the improved levels of pupils' basic skills and their good levels of social skills, their preparation for their next schools and beyond is good.

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

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	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
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?

Teachers make sure that pupils have a 'hands on' approach to much of their learning. Lessons are usually interesting, make use of a variety of approaches and try to combine subjects where possible. This good teaching is usually the case throughout the school but is not yet consistently so. This means that some activities are a little predictable or do not capitalise upon the pupils' natural curiosity. The use of ICT is regular so pupils develop key computing, camera and video skills. When questioning pupils, teachers are usually effective at involving as many pupils as possible, but questions are not always open ended enough to prompt pupils to think more creatively or deeply about the subject in hand. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and ongoing pupil progress meetings help pinpoint any needing an extra boost to their learning. Teachers are usually adept at using the curriculum to devise topics and projects that interest pupils, and have taken steps to make sure that both boys and girls are equally catered for. Projects such as those about dinosaurs enliven learning, but the school recognises that in some areas, they could take risks in devising more creative topics alongside activities to promote basic skills. The curriculum has a number of planned opportunities to learn about others in different parts of the United Kingdom and in other countries. Visits out of the school include local museums and other cultural venues.

The school places great emphasis upon caring for pupils and in catering for their particular needs, and initiatives such as 'peer massage' illustrate the importance of promoting pupils'

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healthy living. Being a 'lead school' for developing pupils' personal, social, and health education reflects their determination to make this aspect of the school outstanding. Potentially vulnerable pupils and their families benefit from a high profile approach in involving them in the life of the school. In most areas, this is proving successful, with parents and carers visiting classes often and only low attendance levels for a small minority of pupils not fully addressed and reduced further. Most parents and carers express their appreciation of the way in which the school cares for and provides help to their children. As one said, 'I like the good services teachers and other staff give to the children ♦ Thanks.'

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A determined effort by senior leaders and staff has succeeded in raising pupils' attainment and progress and in ensuring that pupils' academic progress keeps pace with their personal development. The drive and ambition of staff are evident in the way pupil progress meetings highlight clearly which groups of pupils are lagging behind or making better progress. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and effective in generating priorities for development. It is often based upon regular monitoring of teaching, analysis of information on pupils' progress and the views of parents and pupils. Observations are usually perceptive, although more attention is sometimes given to teaching approaches rather than pupils' learning. Adults at all levels promote equal opportunities well and eliminate discrimination where possible. Teachers are vigilant about ensuring pupils have equal opportunities to attend clubs and have equal access to resources. Good monitoring of pupils' progress means that any groups underachieving are quickly spotted and helped, for example by reallocating teaching assistant support to certain lessons. This works well in supporting certain groups of pupils to achieve in line with fellow pupils.

The governing body is keen to support this desire for improvement, as shown by the Nursery rebuild project. Governors visit regularly to see class activities and attend social events. These give valuable insights, but are not always planned to best effect over the year to help get the full picture of school life. The governing body ensures that safeguarding, including the vetting of staff appointments and health and safety routines, are carried out well. Parents and carers voice their appreciation of the school. The links with them are becoming closer so pupils feel the direct benefit, most noticeably in their general well-being.

The school has developed strong links with schools and organisations in the local area to help promote community cohesion and broaden pupils' understanding of their community.

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Regular activity weeks include an international theme and celebrations of key events such as Chinese New Year. Pupils' understanding of others' backgrounds and beliefs is developed well through their already good understanding of global issues and events through class-work and fundraising for others.

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Nursery, despite the disruption of moving into the main school. This inevitably means that resources and outside spaces have been reduced. That said, the children enjoy using their new surroundings and the school has taken effective steps in ensuring their outdoor learning is catered for satisfactorily. A good range of activities develop their simple coordination, social, early language and number skills. Well-thought-through induction procedures help them settle in to school and then into Reception classes. Adults gain a good knowledge of individual children, and activities in the Reception classes cover a wide area. For example, children enjoyed going on a 'shape hunt' around the school and others liked looking for different shapes on their model house. Children develop positive attitudes and they socialise well, enjoying their practical work both inside and outside the classroom. They acquire a good understanding in important areas such as learning letter sounds and numbers. Simple activities such as looking for buried 'treasure words' in the sand tray help develop their skills. Children develop independence skills appropriately, but although teachers and helpers supervise these activities well, sometimes children are left for a little too long before their interests are re-energised with a word of help from an adult. Children are regularly assessed and activities are modified to help their learning move on. Their good progress means that although some weaknesses remain, particularly in writing and language skills, they enter Year 1 with age-expected levels. In areas such as their social, emotional and physical abilities, they reach better than the expected levels.

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Staff work well together as a team, and innovative ways of recording children's progress using technology to record and transfer information is helping them in keeping a close eye on progress and in recording children's 'learning journeys' for others to see. Staff forge a very positive partnership with parents and carers, which is maintained well throughout the year and helps ensure children's welfare. Simple routines such as children inviting their parents or carers into weekly open afternoons are proving beneficial in aiding children's learning.

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 vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. The proportion of questionnaires returned was lower than average for a primary school. The responses contained a mixture of praise and a smaller number voicing individual concerns or areas that they would like improving. Positive comments covered a variety of points, but mainly referred to the way the school cares for their children and that children enjoyed school and were happy at school. Those who voiced concerns covered a number of unconnected subjects, but these ranged from concerns over behaviour, food at lunchtime, better progress for their children, and ways of improving safety aspects. Inspection findings could not endorse most of these concerns as they found safety aspects to be good, and pupils' progress is generally good. School lunches appeared to be of the quality normally found in schools and pupils generally said they liked them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Belvedere Infant 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 310 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	57	24	40	0	0	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	32	53	27	45	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	52	26	43	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	47	24	40	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	47	29	48	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	50	29	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	47	28	47	1	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)	12	20	36	60	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	38	31	52	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	43	29	48	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	35	30	50	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	42	30	50	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	50	28	47	1	2	1	2

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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belvedere Infant School, Belvedere DA17 6AA

Many thanks for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. Well done for coping so well with the building of your new nursery. Yours is a good school that has got even better since the last time it was inspected.

Here are some of the things we found out

- The Nursery and Reception children make good progress and enjoy all of the activities that take place.
- You reach the expected standards in English and mathematics. You achieve well in most aspects of your work.
- You are good at keeping active at playtimes, as you like playing around your pirate boat, and I know most of you try to eat healthily.
- You behave well and said you feel safe as the school cares for you so well.
- The range of things you do in school is good. I wish I had seen some of those aliens in Year 1 though!
- The school helps those of you who sometimes find work difficult or feel a bit sad at times to achieve well.
- The staff teach you well and the school involves your parents or carers in the life of the school effectively to help it become even better.

We have asked the school to do two things to help it improve further:

- to make the teaching consistently good or better in all classes so that the work you do is challenging, not too easy and exciting where possible
- help a small number of parents and carers to see how important it is that you come to school every day so you can learn lots of new things.

You can help the school to improve even more by keeping up your good behaviour and always coming to school unless you are unwell.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector

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