



New Road School and Nursery Unit

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 118320
Local Authority Medway
Inspection number 280292
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Terry Elston

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bryant Street
School category	Community		Chatham
Age range of pupils	3–11		ME4 5QN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01634 843084
Number on roll (school)	340	Fax number	01634 408208
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mark Snowdon
		Headteacher	Jan Perry
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2000		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007	Inspection number 280292
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school lies within an area of significant deprivation. A high proportion of pupils enter the school at other than normal times as families move in and out of the area. Nearly a third of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities and a similar proportion are eligible for free school meals. These figures are higher than in most schools. There is a higher proportion of pupils with English as an additional language than in most schools, with Bengali and Punjabi the most common mother tongues. Attainment on entry to the Reception is significantly below that normally found, and well below average in speaking, reading and writing.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that serves its community well. Pupils make good progress and achieve well by Year 6 when their overall standards are broadly in line with those found nationally. This success is due in no small part to the good teaching and strong leadership and management, not least by the headteacher. Pupils do especially well in English, where the very good leadership and its impact on the teaching account for pupils' good progress from when they enter the school. However, the leaders' focus on mathematics and science has not been as strong and this is why standards in these subjects are lower than in English. In particular, pupils struggle with mathematical and scientific problems and investigations because teachers have not given them enough practice. The school recognises this and the improvements in the teaching of these skills are already bearing fruit.

Teachers make lessons very interesting by including lots of practical work and opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with each other. This is why pupils enjoy school so much. Their personal development is good. They mostly behave well and their attendance has improved a lot since the last inspection. Pupils' moral and social awareness is well developed, which shows in the way they respect others' points of view and think deeply about issues such as fairness and forgiveness. They take responsibility willingly and do much to support others in the community. A big strength is their excellent cultural development and high level of racial harmony. This shows the benefit of the whole school's strong focus on celebrating the richness of the different cultures of the world, and in particular those represented in the school. The curriculum gives pupils a good balance of work on basic literacy and numeracy skills and good opportunities to develop their creative abilities. It equips them well for the future.

Parents think very highly of the school. They particularly value the good care, guidance and support it provides for their children that helps them when they are troubled and keeps them safe. This was summed up very well by one parent whose child had moved here from another country. She said, 'I can't believe how this school has helped my son. All the staff have cared for him so well. He's doing brilliantly, loves his work and can't wait to get to school in the morning'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science by teachers giving pupils more practice at problem solving and investigations.
- Leaders should apply the same rigour to evaluating the teaching and learning in mathematics and science as they do in English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievements are good. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception but attainment is still below average in the areas of communication, language and literacy and personal and social development by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards are still below average by Year 2 but close to those found nationally in reading and mathematics. In writing, standards are below average but pupils are still achieving well given their very poor writing skills when they enter the school. These achievements were reflected in the 2006 teachers' assessments at Year 2 that show a marked improvement on previous years' results in all subjects.

Pupils continue this good progress in Years 3 to 6 where standards of the oldest ones are similar to national levels in English and in some aspects of mathematics and science. This was demonstrated by the 2006 national tests that showed good improvements in English and mathematics from previous years but a slight drop in science. These achievements are good, overall, and very good in English. In mathematics and science pupils achieve well, but their investigational work in both subjects lets them down. Many find it hard to plan investigations and work out what they have to do to solve problems. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well and their national test results are consistently at least as good as those of other pupils in the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress. They benefit from good support and achieve particularly well in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and make significant contributions to the way they learn. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall, with a particular strength in their cultural development. This is outstanding and is illustrated very well in the way pupils appreciate the richness of other cultures and make friends irrespective of others' ethnic backgrounds. Most behave well but there are those whose behaviour is occasionally poor. However, these instances are rare. Pupils much enjoy school and attendance is good. This is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection. Pupils feel safe in school and have the confidence to talk to adults about any concerns. They explain knowledgeably about how to live healthy lifestyles and avoid the misuse of drugs and alcohol. They have a very good awareness of their local community, and involve themselves enthusiastically in local projects, such as when they helped refurbish a nearby playground. Pupils take responsibility readily and the active school council is justifiably proud of the work it does to improve the school. They feel well prepared for the future by taking advantage of the many opportunities to plan budgets, work together on projects and improve their communication skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching and learning are good. The benefits of very effective staff training are evident in the good levels of expertise shown by all staff. This ensures that pupils learn quickly in all subjects. Teachers are very good at explaining at the start of lessons what pupils are expected to learn. This helps pupils understand what they are doing and enables teachers to assess their progress accurately at the end. Teachers work hard at making learning fun, which is why so many pupils say that the best thing about school is the lessons.

Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work, which is why they achieve so well. However, they do not always demand enough of their investigational skills, particularly in mathematics and science. In one science lesson, for example, all pupils were expected to do the same experiment, and while less-able pupils struggled to complete the task, the most able ones flew through the work and finished early. The school is working hard to rectify this weakness, as was illustrated in a mathematics lesson when the more able pupils were given the very challenging task of working on their own to equip a new classroom within a tight budget. They worked feverishly to research prices on the Internet and juggle their figures when the teacher said they must add 15% to their prices. They had a great deal of fun and were justifiably proud of their excellent achievements by the end. Teachers' regular assessments of pupils are very thorough and provide pupils with a clear picture of their levels of attainment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that makes learning interesting. Detailed planning ensures that teachers have a good basis for their lesson plans that meets the learning needs of all groups of pupils. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs explains why they make rapid progress. Similarly, the good provision for pupils with English as an additional language gives them the support they need to flourish. The school enriches the curriculum with a good range of activities at lunchtime and after school, including the very popular French club. There is very good use of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum and bring it to life. Provision for personal, social and health education is good, and gives pupils valuable opportunities to discuss their worries and learn how to stay healthy and safe. There is excellent provision for pupils to learn about different cultures, and this helps to account for the outstanding degree of racial harmony in the school. The provision for basic literacy is very good, but in mathematics and science the curriculum offers too few opportunities for pupils to investigate topics and extend their learning further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of care, guidance and support has a strong impact on the personal development and achievement of pupils. All adults provide very good personal care and support, especially for vulnerable children and their families. There are robust systems in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Academic guidance is good, with clear and effective individual setting of targets to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. This is enhanced by the way that pupils are expected to assess and evaluate their own progress. This works very well and enables pupils to develop a clear understanding of what they do well and what they need to do better. The marking of pupils' work usually includes valuable suggestions to help them improve, but this is not always the case, and some offers too little guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management are the keys to the school's success. The headteacher's high expectations and sharp awareness of the strengths of the staff mean that all members of the school are working together towards the common goal of high achievement. The headteacher listens carefully to the views of others, and consults pupils, teachers and parents regularly about ways to improve the school further. Other leaders share the headteacher's commitment to high standards and support her very well. They make a very effective team. This has helped the school make good improvement since the last inspection and shows why it will continue to do so. The leaders have good systems to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and work very well together to improve the school. For example, following a review of pupils' standards, the school made significant improvements to the teaching and learning of English, and the national test results in 2006 rose significantly as a result. This did mean, however, that less time was devoted to the monitoring of mathematics and science and helps to account for lower performance in these tests. The leaders recognise this, and have already started to improve the teaching and learning of investigational skills in these subjects. The school is supported and guided well by a good governing body. Governors know their school very well and are not afraid to hold it to account.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so welcoming when we inspected your school. Many were kind enough to talk to us and told us a lot about what you liked and disliked. We found that you go to a good school that does most things well and there are only a couple of areas that need improving to make it even better.

What we liked most.

- You make good progress, especially in your reading and writing.
- Your behaviour is nearly always good (even when it is raining and blowing a gale!).
- Your teachers are doing a good job. They make lessons interesting and help you enjoy school.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know how to improve things. This is why the school gets better and better.
- You have an excellent knowledge of different cultures and how other people around the world live. This helps you get on well with all groups of pupils, whatever their backgrounds.
- All adults in the school care for you well and keep you safe.

What could be improved.

- You sometimes find it hard to do investigations in mathematics and science so we have asked your teachers to give you more practice.
- The leaders need to check more carefully in mathematics and science that teachers are teaching these investigational skills well.