



# Bishops Down Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118468  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 280322  
**Inspection dates** 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sheila Browning AI

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

|                                    |                    |                           |                 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Primary            | <b>School address</b>     | Rydal Drive     |
| <b>School category</b>             | Community          |                           | Tunbridge Wells |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 3 to 11            |                           | Kent TN4 9SU    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01892 520114    |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 236                | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01892 619130    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Mr Nick Powell  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 1 November 1999    | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mrs E Savage    |

|                             |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school draws its pupils mostly from the socially advantaged residential area near the school, but a considerable proportion travel from other socially mixed areas of Tunbridge Wells. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than nationally, and is as much as two thirds in some classes. The school has a unit for children with physical disabilities and the unit is fully integrated into the mainstream school. On entry to the Nursery, children's overall attainment is broadly at the level expected for their age. The school operates their own 'wrap-around care' from early morning to evening during term time and in the summer holidays. Additionally, it has a sports partnership with a local secondary school. In recognition of its work, the school has gained Healthy Schools status and Sports Activemark and has received the Investor in People Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Bishops Down is a good school where pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching. It gives good value for money. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress because of the very good support they are given.

Pupils' personal development is good, with some outstanding features. Attendance is above average and pupils' behaviour is exemplary, reflecting teachers' high expectations. Pupils enjoy school greatly, and they contribute really positively to the school and the local community. In this inclusive school the national 'Every Child Matters' agenda is central to all that it does. A strong team of senior managers led by a committed headteacher and well-informed governors lead the school well and share a clear vision for improvement. All show a determination to work closely with staff, pupils, parents and governors to raise standards. Their self-evaluation is accurate and has helped to secure good improvement since the last inspection. The school has a strong capacity to improve further.

Children are given a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result of a very well-planned and creative curriculum they make good progress to attain standards which are higher than average when they start Year 1. The school is now working towards improving the curriculum in Years 1 and 2, so that it better meets pupils' needs. Pupils' writing skills are a relative weakness in Years 1 and 2. The school is working hard to tackle this through targeted support and an improved curriculum.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the good teaching seen to raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 and encourage pupils to record their work with accuracy and precision.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average and pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. Children join the Nursery Year with skills broadly at the level expected for their age. By the end of Reception Year, most children reach standards that are above those expected for their age. While standards have been in line with the national average in national tests at the end of Year 2, not enough pupils have reached the higher levels for writing. The school recognises that pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 and 2, though satisfactory, could be better and it is working hard to improve standards in these years. The school's tracking of individual pupils' progress in Years 3–6 confirms that pupils make good progress towards meeting their challenging targets, and several have made exceptional progress from their starting points. Pupils

with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress because of the very good support they are given.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, with some outstanding features. Pupils behave exceptionally well and relationships are very positive. Pupils are friendly and very well mannered. As a young pupil said, 'it was quite scary when I first joined the school but on my first day I made friends very quickly.' Attendance is good, with pupils very keen to come to school as they very clearly enjoy their lessons and have very positive attitudes to their work.

The moral and social development of the pupils is very strong as a result of the school's very caring atmosphere. The pupils feel safe. They know that if someone teases them they can speak to an adult and it will stop. Pupils' cultural development is good as a result of the emphasis placed on this through the curriculum, for example, through the 'Take-away project' when pupils adopt and study different cultures in depth. Pupils respond well to good opportunities for spiritual development during class reflection times. They have an outstanding awareness of healthy eating and particularly enjoy the walking bus arrangements. Pupils are keen to take on a range of responsibilities and enjoy being on the school council. Skills to help pupils in later life develop well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good so that pupils respond very rapidly to teachers' instructions. The tasks and methods used in lessons engage and motivate pupils well. Pupils show exceptionally high levels of interest and their behaviour is frequently excellent. These very positive attitudes enhance pupils' learning as they make a marked contribution to the way pupils concentrate on their work and collaborate with each other. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are good. Specific targets are set for individual pupils, which help them to focus on what they need to learn to improve. Planning is carefully organised overall to cater for the range of ability in classes but on occasion there is not enough focused work to support lower-attaining pupils. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the teaching during group work. Pupils with specific learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported with clear and specific individual learning plans. Gifted and talented pupils are supported well through a good range of extension activities. Up until recently there have been limited opportunities for pupils to use correct and precise language in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' work is regularly marked. Comments are positive and helpful and good guidance is provided on what pupils need to do to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and it supports the pupils' wide spectrum of abilities well. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy a carefully planned range of creative and exciting opportunities that focuses on their individual needs. The school has rightly identified the need to extend this good practice into Years 1 and 2 to better meet pupils' learning needs. The curriculum is interesting and involves pupils in many first-hand experiences. It now focuses well on the development of basic skills, including writing. Since the last inspection, significant investment in resources, an emphasis on training in ICT and links with local secondary schools have had a positive impact on pupil attainment. To further improve learning the school employs specialists to teach French, physical education and music. The curriculum is enriched further through special events such as themed weeks, travel and healthy eating and lifestyle programmes. Consequently, pupils gain a wide range of skills and enjoyment and raise their awareness of healthy, safe lifestyles.

Activities such as working with the local council in improving traffic congestion outside the school and designing new local play facilities further enhance learning and develop skills for later life. Numerous visits and visitors, including parents, theatre and musical groups, enhance the curriculum and contribute significantly to pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship development. Pupils' involvement in the extensive range of after-school clubs and activities is high. In recognition of its work the school has gained Healthy Schools status and has received an Activemark Award.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good, with some outstanding features. Health, safety and child protection arrangements are robust. The school benefits from having a designated unit for the physically disabled, and pupils and parents can readily access the additional services and advice available. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children are given effective support to settle quickly and to develop happily. Arrangements for pupils to transfer to secondary education are smooth and ensure that pupils tackle new situations confidently. Monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress ensure good standards are maintained. All pupils have challenging targets and know what they need to do to improve. Pupils say they feel supported and that their views are regularly sought. The school council organises charity events and is involved in the decision making of the school, such as consulting on and promoting social activities at playtimes. This really is an inclusive school which caters very well for children with physical disabilities as well as those with a range of learning difficulties, and these pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life. Links with outside agencies and partnerships across the community to provide support for children and their families are exemplary. Communications with parents are good and they are outstandingly supportive of the work the school does.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because there is a clear vision from a strong leadership team with a determined focus on raising standards and pupils' progress. This is due to the very clear direction led by the headteacher. Support for and monitoring of teaching is very well organised. The achievement of pupils has been carefully tracked each year but for a few pupils in the past this has shown variable progress. This has been tackled now with more frequent and refined targeting for each pupil. Any pupil who may be underachieving is identified quickly and additional support provided to help the pupil to improve. As a result, the provisional assessment results of pupils in Year 2 have improved since 2005. There is a strong commitment to professional development for all staff, who speak very positively about the opportunities provided for them to improve their skills. There is a determination to involve pupils with disabilities in the activities of the school. Planning for the development of the school is well organised, and takes account of the views of parents and other partners. Good structures and systems are significant features of this school. Assessment results and lesson observations are carefully analysed to provide an accurate picture of the school's performance and to identify priorities for improvement. Governors support and monitor the work of the school effectively and have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses. Governors ask critical questions about performance, and are now refining their skills in this area. Financial management is very secure.

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## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |              |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage  | 2   | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes | NA |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 | NA |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 | NA |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 2 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | NA |

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review      | 2   | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 1   | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 2   | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected  | Yes | NA |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily  | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise  | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse   | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements                                   | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place  | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism                                | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships   | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them                   | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills  | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams                                  | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form          | NA  |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy               | NA  |

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and seeing your lessons.

These are the things we found that Bishops Down School does especially well:

- You are making good progress with your schoolwork.
- We were impressed with your behaviour and how well you look after one another, which ensures that your school is a safe and happy one.
- The adults in your school look after you really well.
- Your good teachers and all the adults work hard to give you work that is interesting and fun and you say you really enjoy school, particularly all the extra-curricular clubs and activities.
- You have outstanding knowledge and awareness of how to lead healthy, safe lifestyles.

We know that everyone wants to do better and we have suggested some things to help:

- We have asked the teachers to continue to help you improve your writing in Years 1 and 2.