



Bysing Wood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118497
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280328
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 7 November 2005
Reporting inspector Joan Greenfield RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lower Road
School category	Community		Faversham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Kent ME13 7NU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01795 534644
Number on roll	84	Fax number	01795 532875
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Linda Sanderson
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Shirley Lall

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, which is situated on the edge of Faversham, is much smaller than average. The area it serves is one of considerable social disadvantage and almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Numbers have declined greatly over the past few years and the sizes of some year groups are very small. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average and many have a complex range of social, emotional, behavioural, and speech and language needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, which confirms the school's own view of itself. Much progress has been made in the past year to raise standards and to ensure that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although standards remain significantly below the national averages, the headteacher and her staff have been successful in overcoming a legacy of past underachievement. Maintaining this improvement requires constant vigilance and the careful monitoring of the children's progress because of their wide range of learning and other needs. The school's checking systems are robust and effective. The quality of work in the reception year is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress from their low starting points but few will reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the year.

Teaching is satisfactory and some of it is good. Teachers plan well to provide children with suitable work and to make it interesting. Not all teachers use their teaching assistants as well as they might nor, in their marking, give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils are not particularly enthusiastic about their work but their attitudes and behaviour are mostly satisfactory. Many lack the skills and confidence to take initiative in deciding how to undertake their work. Although improving, their attendance is unsatisfactory. The school provides pupils with good care, support and guidance. All staff work hard to ensure that pupils receive the necessary support. Their positive relationships with the pupils are a strength, and are valued by them. The involvement of parents is growing and parents recognise the progress the school has made in the past year. The school knows itself well through the rigour of its own checking procedures and the added support of some external evaluation. From the evidence of the progress in the last two years, senior staff have a good capacity to improve the school further. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' skills and confidence to help them take more responsibility for their own learning in order to raise achievement further
- Improve the consistency of the teaching across the school to the level of the best, especially in planning the use of teaching assistants and in the quality of marking
- Continue to work closely with parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory, reversing a trend that has been apparent in the school for several years. Children enter the school with low levels of skills and experiences, and a considerable number have speech and language and other difficulties. Although they are making satisfactory progress, most pupils do not reach the expected goals for learning by the end of the reception year. This means that their starting points in Year 1 are well below average. Standards in the national tests in Year

2 and Year 6 have been significantly below the national averages for several years and up until 2005, pupils have been underachieving in relation to their starting points. In 2005, because of the school's strategies, standards have begun to rise slowly, more clearly in Year 2 than in Year 6, with the majority of pupils reaching the targets set for them. The evidence from pupils' current work and the records of their progress show that pupils are making satisfactory progress. Nearly all are on course to meet their targets, which are suitably challenging. Their progress in reading, mathematics and science is stronger than their progress in writing. The school as a whole is working hard and effectively to develop pupils' writing and there are clear signs of improvement through the structured approaches that teachers now use. There are no noticeable differences between the progress of different groups of pupils, but the considerable social, emotional and behavioural needs of some pupils, especially boys, are preventing them from learning as effectively as they might. Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. A considerable number start school with poorly developed social skills and have little confidence in their own abilities or respect for others. From this low starting point, through the range of opportunities provided and the consistent way that all staff relate to and interact with them, pupils improve their social and personal skills satisfactorily. This helps them grow in confidence and raises their self-esteem. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory but they show few signs of real enthusiasm for their work. Although improving, they have not yet developed the skills of working confidently on their own or with others.

Pupils like school and some older pupils comment that 'our school is kind' and 'teachers don't shout at you'. Behaviour is satisfactory and staff manage children with quite severe behavioural and emotional difficulties effectively. Parents comment favourably about the improvement in pupils' behaviour in recent months. Attendance remains below the national average but has increased over the past year. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss healthy lifestyle choices and most have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe. They make a positive contribution to the community through the school council and in supporting local charities, and are slowly developing the skills to prepare them for their future lives.

Grade: 3

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some of the teaching is good, especially with the older classes. All staff have established positive relationships with pupils, and they provide good role models because they deal with them consistently and calmly, even

when presented with very challenging behaviour. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, and ensure that the work is pitched at the appropriate level. At times, teachers direct the activities too much, leaving too little scope for pupils to develop their skills of taking initiative and responsibility and learning to make decisions for themselves. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support in group activities but they are not always involved sufficiently during the beginnings of lessons or in class discussions. Teachers check pupils' progress regularly to ensure that they are on course to meet their targets. Not all pupils are clear about their targets and the marking of some work does not always give pupils sufficient help in showing them what they need to do to improve further. Where marking is most effective, as for example in the Years 5/6 class, pupils are given clear pointers, which are clearly reflected in improvements in subsequent work.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy a soundly planned curriculum that is enriched by a good variety of additional activities. The curriculum in the reception year and in Years 1 - 6 meets the needs and interests of pupils satisfactorily, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the higher attaining pupils. The mixed-age classes provide teachers with additional challenges in planning appropriate work but the curriculum is kept under regular review to ensure that pupils make progress. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has developed well since the last inspection and pupils use ICT satisfactorily to support their learning. Particular emphasis has rightly been placed on developing pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science. In addition, the school is currently focusing on the creative aspects of the curriculum and in making stronger links across subjects. The provision for personal, social and health education, including the opportunities for pupils to discuss sensitive issues together in 'circle time', is supporting pupils' personal development well, as well as increasing their understanding of the need to keep safe and stay healthy. However, pupils do not get sufficient help from assistants during play times to develop their social skills enough. A good range of extra-curricular and other enrichment activities enhances pupils' experiences and their enjoyment of learning.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for its pupils well. Arrangements for child protection are fully in place and there are good systems for ensuring their safety and welfare. Staff identify the learning, personal, social and emotional needs of children at an early stage and provide good levels of individual support. Vulnerable children, of whom there are many, are supported well, as are children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The work of the learning mentor, in particular, is having a beneficial impact on many pupils. Links with a wide variety of external agencies are effective in supporting pupils with particular

needs. Good provision is also made for the more capable pupils. The school has robust systems for checking on absences and is working hard to ensure that parents send their children to school regularly. Some parents do not always send all their children to school if one child is ill. The school's strategies and high expectations are improving pupils' behaviour. The tracking of pupils' academic and personal progress against their targets is thorough in the main and children who are in danger of underachieving receive appropriate support. The tracking systems in the reception year are not as strong as elsewhere in the school.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and have some good features. The headteacher, since her appointment in 2003, leads by example. She has set a very clear direction for raising standards in the school from a very low baseline and for improving the quality of provision. In this, she receives good support from her leadership team. Several changes of staff in the past two years have meant that some initiatives have taken longer than anticipated to be implemented securely. The current team of staff, however, is working effectively together to ensure consistency of approach, especially in the management of behaviour and enhancing the quality of learning. The way that school improvement priorities are being implemented consistently across the school is a considerable strength. The checking of teaching and learning and other areas of the school's work is regular and rigorous. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, which is reflected well in its improvement plan. Parents are involved more effectively and are happy with the improvements that have occurred. Governance is satisfactory and the governing body has ensured that the school meets its legal responsibilities. Governors are supportive and visit the school, spending time in lessons, looking at work and talking to pupils. They do not all formally record the outcomes of these visits, which would help the governing body to build up a clearer picture of how well the school is making progress. The school uses its resources satisfactorily and has made reasonable progress since the last inspection. The considerable improvement made during the past year shows that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Grade: 3

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Bysing Wood Primary School Lower Road Faversham Kent ME13 7NU

8 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your help in talking to us about the work you do and what you think about the school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers.

What we most liked about your school

Most of you are doing your best and teachers are working hard to help you learn. Those of you who find the work difficult are getting the right sort of help.

You like being in the school and feel that your teachers are kind to you.

You are friendly and polite to each other and to visitors, and most of you are behaving as the school expects you to.

Your headteacher and other staff know how well you are doing and how best to help you do even better.

You enjoy the activities that the school arranges for you at lunchtimes and at the end of the school day.

The teachers who run your school know what it does well and what it needs to do to get even better.

What we have asked your school to do now

Give you more opportunities to decide how you will carry out your work so that you can do even better.

Make sure that the teachers' comments in your books help you to know a little more clearly how you can improve your work.

Work more closely with your parents and carers to make sure that you come to school every day. You can help with this.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and do well.

Yours sincerely

Joan Greenfield

Mrs Joan Greenfield Lead inspector