



Borough Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118847
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280408
Inspection dates 22 June 2006 to 23 June 2006
Reporting inspector David Collard AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Approach
School category	Foundation		Borough Green
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8JZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01732 883459
Number on roll	385	Fax number	01732 882169
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S M Murray
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Steven Gorst

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Borough Green is a larger than average primary school that serves the local small town and also takes children from outlying villages. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low. All speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational need.

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 an effective school providing good value for money. While this is a similar judgement to that at the last inspection, the school, through its stringent analysis, has demonstrated that it continues to move forward, a fact appreciated by parents. One wrote '...the new headteacher must be congratulated for an extremely good effort in continuing to improve the standards'. Good standards in Year 6 have been maintained over a period of time because of the good teaching and consequently pupils achieve well. Children generally enter the Reception class with well developed social skills and have good communication and language development. These Foundation Stage children get off to a good start because their needs are met well. Good leadership has been the key to improvement. The realistic self-evaluation matches the findings of this inspection and acknowledges that although the school has been highly regarded for many years there are some key areas that need improving. For instance, while above average, the results in national tests have fluctuated because the inconsistent assessment data has not always supported teachers. This has led to variabilities in teaching and therefore pupils' achievement. The improvements are enabling all teachers to target work towards individual need but it is still too early for these measures to have had the impact that they should. Nevertheless, pupils are achieving well academically and their personal development is outstanding. What is especially noticeable as a visitor is the strong family atmosphere amongst the whole school community and a desire to make sure that all pupils succeed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the assessment data to inform teachers about how well pupils are doing and to help ensure all staff are aware of how best to improve the academic achievement of all ability groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils across all levels of ability make good progress through the school so that by the time they leave Year 6 they achieve above average results in national tests. This has been the case for the last five years although performance has fluctuated. As the leadership team has recognised, progress in the past, while always at least satisfactory, has been variable. It has successfully identified, and is now starting to develop, strategies to iron out these differences. The standards of children on entry to the school are above those expected nationally; progress is good because teachers know children's needs well and provide them with challenging activities. As a result, children in the Reception class are reaching or exceeding the standards expected of them and are well prepared for the more formal work within the National Curriculum. Through Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress because the teaching has been strengthened and is better aimed at challenging all levels of ability. Those now in Year 2 are achieving slightly above average standards in national tests. Similarly good progress occurs

through Years 3 to 6. This is confirmed by national test results and by the more rigorous assessment information that has been collected in the last few years. Recent test results, while not confirmed, suggest that the challenging targets have been reached and are a slight improvement on last year. They are once again likely to be above average. Pupils' work is used effectively to improve their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of different subjects. This is particularly helping the significant number of more able pupils to be more inquisitive. For instance, one girl, when asked to generate questions about a poem had written, 'Why did the horsemen flee the wood?' as a way of trying to understand the poet's intentions in the verse she was reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Outstanding levels of enjoyment and well-being are evident throughout the school. What pupils like most are the very wide range of sports activities and their teachers. One was heard to say, 'they are really nice and explain things to you'. Attendance is good. Behaviour is excellent and even though very small proportions of pupils are quite capable of challenging authority, exclusions are very rare because teachers know how to deal with difficult pupils. Pupils have a very strong sense of being safe in school. They are very confident that adults will sort out their problems. There are outstanding opportunities for pupils to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles ranging from especially high quality lunches to whole-school participation in a two kilometre run. One pupil described the school as 'energetic'. Visiting, and fundraising for, a local hospice and nursery gives pupils a good understanding of the needs of others in the community. Enterprise projects, such as being involved in financing a shortbread production, make a strong contribution to pupils' economic wellbeing, linked to their basic skills. Pupils' moral and social development is excellent, enhanced through a strong emphasis on caring and respecting others as modelled by the staff. The school council, and many responsible roles for older pupils, also develops a very strong social awareness. Good spiritual development comes through having regard for wider issues such as global warming and the Eco-schools project, and through reflection and prayer, for example saying grace before lunch. Cultural development is enhanced well through, for instance, a strong international theme for Arts and Book Week and all pupils, including those in the Reception class, learning French.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching through the school is a significant factor in the consistency of progress that the pupils make. While this was also the case at the last inspection there have been significant improvements that have started to eliminate the variability. All teaching is at least satisfactory, much of it good and there are some examples of exemplary practice. Teaching at its best is characterised by a buzz of excitement so that pupils are actively challenged and work is linked across a whole range of subjects.

Satisfactory lessons are less targeted towards this consistency of challenge. Soon after arriving the headteacher conducted a stringent analysis of performance and good support provided where it was needed. This has improved provision, particularly within the Foundation Stage for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the teaching in Years 1 and 2. Children in the Reception classes receive a good balance of both teacher directed activities as well as opportunities to work and play independently. They are very well prepared for work within the National Curriculum in Year 1. Through the rest of the school, planning is good and all teachers are aware of the need to extend the significant numbers of potentially high achievers. Equally, those with lower ability are supported well so that many reach the nationally expected levels for their age. The school knows it needs to make more sophisticated use of the wide-ranging data because this information is not used as well to target the individual needs of the middle ability range.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum provides all learners with an interesting range of activities. Teachers have successfully planned a curriculum that makes meaningful links between subjects that enhances pupils' enjoyment and their learning. This is clearly evident in the lively, well presented displays. Specialist teaching supports physical education and music very well. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils make healthy choices and develop life skills. Residential visits give good support to these aspects of provision. Special events weeks together with visits, visitors and clubs enliven the curriculum and give pupils good access to first hand and practical learning experiences. Enrichment courses provide good opportunities for pupils identified as gifted and talented. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school has rightly identified that more needs to be done to ensure teachers are working to help pupils apply ICT skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well looked after in school by a caring and committed staff. Consequently, pupils feel safe and confident which has a positive impact on learning. Training in child protection issues is regularly updated and health and safety matters are fully addressed. For example, the footpath running through the grounds has been closed off which makes access much better organised. The school benefits greatly from a large number of volunteers but will not accept their help until the appropriate checks have been carried out. There is still some inconsistency in the use and effectiveness of how pupil targets are used to enable all to learn as well as they can. However, pupils do know their targets, and plans are in place to use assessment more effectively. Pupils who have specific medical or learning needs are very well supported both academically and personally.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management ensure an equal focus on pupils' personal development and academic achievement. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision for the way ahead. He is well supported by the strong leadership team, staff and governing body. There were no issues for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, the current priority for improving assessment strategies to monitor and track pupil performance is a good example of the school's commitment to raising attainment further. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. These are reflected well in its self-evaluation and development plans. The latter reflects the views of all and is an effective tool to move the school forward. The role of subject leaders has developed well since the last inspection. Some are still learning to decipher the array of data that they are being presented with but all play a decisive role in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or other specific needs is managed well, as is that for children in Reception. The school actively seeks the views of parents and pupils to improve provision, for example by reviewing arrangements for the provision of homework, and giving girls the option of wearing trousers as part of their school uniform. The school maintains very good links with other organisations. These include working effectively with partner schools on aspects of learning, sport and staff development. Governors carry out their duties effectively. They bring very good expertise for instance in the management of finances and play their full part in strategic planning. This level of understanding is ensuring that senior staff are both supported but also challenged about the decisions they are making.

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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?	2	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	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	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	2	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

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

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

26 June 2006 Dear Pupils Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you all. We especially liked the chance to have lunch together and to see the wonderful meals that are cooked for you. Many of you asked what we thought of your school and so I have included a few of the main points below.

- You are a credit to your school. You told us how much you enjoyed yourselves and we could see why. We have said that your behaviour is excellent and you clearly look after one another very well.
- You also told us you think you work hard and we agree. You attend a good school and make good progress. Many of you are doing well by the time you leave Year 6. In fact, when compared to other schools, you are achieving above average standards in your tests.
- You think your teachers plan work that is exciting and interesting and we agree with you. They not only make sure you learn all the basics such as reading, writing and mathematics but also that you can see how this is relevant in other subjects.
- All the staff make sure you are looked after well. They check to make sure you make good progress from one year to the next and that any problems are sorted out quickly. We have asked them to make sure that all the information that is gathered from your tests and from the work you do is used effectively to help the teachers give all of you challenging work.
- You have a great range of clubs, visits and visitors. We have mentioned some of them in the report but there are just too many to list them all.
- Since your new headteacher and deputy headteacher arrived they have worked hard to make sure that the school, even though it was good before, continues to improve. They have many more interesting things planned for the future that will help your school improve. Finally, can we wish you all the success for the rest of your time at Borough Green and hope that you continue to work hard when you move to your next school.

Yours faithfully David Collard (Lead Inspector)
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