



Bardwell School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123344
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281450
Inspection dates 29 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Hendon Place
School category	Community special		Bicester
Age range of pupils	2 to 16		OX26 4RZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01869 242182
Number on roll	51	Fax number	01869 243111
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Mills
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Christine Hughes

Age group 2 to 16	Inspection dates 29 June 2006 - 29 June 2006	Inspection number 281450
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bardwell is a community special school in Bicester. All pupils have statements of special educational needs as a result of their severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have complex medical conditions. The social and economical background of pupils reflects a wide range of family circumstances and the great majority of pupils are White British with more than twice as many boys as girls in the school. The school achieved Investors in People status in July 2004 and provides advice and support to some local mainstream schools for a growing number of pupils who have dual placements.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bardwell is a good school with some outstanding features. Its own evaluation that its effectiveness is satisfactory is judged by inspectors to be unduly modest. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'the school offers a calm, but dynamic atmosphere where leadership is strong and caring'. Inspectors agree. The very committed and hard working headteacher has a good vision for improving the school and, together with a very supportive deputy, enthusiastic staff and well informed governors, strives to improve the learning opportunities for all pupils.

The quality of teaching and pupil support is consistently good across the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and make good progress. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and do particularly well with their personal development and communication skills. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent and, overall, their personal development and well-being are outstanding. The curriculum is developing well and generally meets the needs and interests of all pupils. The school recognises the need to further develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. The provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is excellent and parents are very appreciative. The development of pupils' moral and social understanding is excellent and they clearly demonstrate pleasure in socialising with each other and have a clear idea of what is right and wrong. Governors are very effective and the school works extremely well in partnership with others to ensure that pupils' needs are well met. There have been good improvements in all areas since the last inspection and it is clearly evident that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on recent developments to further improve the use of ICT to support pupils' learning, progress and achievement across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils make good progress throughout the school. They are successful in meeting the challenging targets they are set. Due to the nature of their learning difficulties, pupils' standards of achievement are well below those of their mainstream peers. Children in the Foundation Stage are assessed on entry and then at regular intervals as they progress through the school. Teachers and support staff use this information well as they produce individual education plans and targets for every pupil. Pupils benefit greatly from these targets as they inform teachers of the progress being made and this has a positive impact on raising pupils' confidence, self-esteem and achievement. It is clear from the carefully maintained pupil records that all pupil groups make equally good progress, including the small number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Older pupils achieve accredited qualifications and two Year 11 pupils

gained passes in English and mathematics. Pupils follow the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses and have been awarded bronze level certificates. A parent wrote 'he has an excellent education and we are amazed with the progress he has made.'

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school rates pupils' personal development and well-being as good but the inspectors judge them to be outstanding. The high quality of provision means that pupils' moral and social development is excellent. Pupils relate very well, are supportive of each other and are eager to please. The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils become totally engrossed in their work and are excited by the feelings they experience through the sensory curriculum. Non-attendance is invariably due to medical reasons and the school maintains close supportive links with families. Pupils clearly demonstrate their pleasure in lessons and are eager to fully participate in all activities. The smiles, laughter and singing from pupils during a swimming lesson were truly infectious. Pupils do their best to behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others and older pupils can explain why eating healthy food and taking exercise, such as swimming, is good for you. Pupils understand the importance of supporting those less fortunate than themselves and recognise and support local and national fundraising events. As they get older, pupils learn about employment choices and many benefit from work-related learning and work experience placements.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Learning is good as a result of consistently good or better teaching. Pupils enjoy their lessons because relationships are excellent and their effort and achievement is celebrated at every opportunity. Adult team work is effectively co-ordinated to support pupils in meeting their learning targets that are well matched to their needs. Teaching assistants work hard to ensure that all pupils get the best out of lessons and carefully monitor and record their progress. Pupils' progress is assessed and used well to inform teacher's planning. The quality of learning and teaching is monitored, and helpful and appreciated feedback is given to help teachers improve further. Teachers have planned opportunities to observe each other's lessons and consider the very best practice to help their own development. In the very best lessons, teachers provide a wide range of stimulating and motivating activities, individual pupil needs are effectively met and independent learning is encouraged. There are high expectations of pupil performance and pupil assessment opportunities are well planned. Lessons are well supported by consistent signing and the use of symbols to aid communication and pupil participation. Pupils say they really enjoy their time in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and effectively meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Weaknesses that were identified during the last inspection have been addressed and the school now has an effective topic-based curriculum. This has had a very positive impact on both the teachers and the pupils. Teachers enjoy working across the breadth of the curriculum and the pupils enjoy the variety and flexibility and that this has generated. Pupils now have opportunities to follow accredited courses as well as work experience and work-related learning. The school is successful in teaching pupils about healthy living and safe practices and pupils say how much they enjoy coming to school and achieving well. Too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum are planned, which limits their learning and progress in other subjects. The curriculum and pupil experiences are further enhanced by visits from artists, musicians and circus performers and after-school clubs and holiday activities for pupils and families. Some pupils benefit from time in local mainstream schools and older pupils from attendance at colleges. Pupils also have the opportunity of taking their performances outside of the school, such as when they present their version of Shakespeare's Macbeth. The curriculum supports pupils' interests and motivates them to succeed so they can enjoy their achievements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding level of pupil care, guidance and support and places the individual pupil at the centre of all it does. All staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, therapists and medical staff work effectively together to ensure the individual needs of all pupils are met. Academic, personal and social development is closely monitored and assessed and informs detailed pupil reports. Parents appreciate the 'open door' communication with the school and feel fully supported by all staff. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and one parent wrote, 'this is a loving and caring school and my son is happy to come in and is still smiling when he returns home'. The school provides a safe learning environment in which pupils can develop their confidence and self-esteem. Arrangements for child protection are understood by all adults and pupils say they feel safe in school and 'teachers are friendly and helpful'. Pupils receive good support and guidance and are helped to make choices about their future options when they leave school and have well-planned opportunities to learn about the world at work. There are good links with colleges, where pupils develop their confidence and independence and where experiences help prepare them for the challenges that lay ahead after school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a motivating and supportive leadership style and a clear understanding of how the school should improve.

Together with the able deputy there is a clear understanding of how to review and improve the school's performance. The focus is clearly on promoting good pupil progress and achievement and providing high quality care. Inspection findings in a number of areas are better than the school's own more modest evaluations. The school consults and works extremely well with external agencies. Consequently, the best possible support is effectively co-ordinated and meets the agreed needs of the pupils. Parents are highly supportive of the headteacher and staff. There are strong links and excellent communication with parents and their views are sought in order to improve the provision for their children. The quality of education is monitored and teachers appreciate the supportive feedback that follows. Suitable arrangements to monitor the performance of all staff are in place. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively as a team, their work is valued and, consequently, staff morale is high. Issues raised in the last inspection have been effectively addressed and leadership and management clearly demonstrate its good capacity to further improve. Governance is a strength of the school. Statutory requirements are met and governors are fully involved in the strategic management and self-evaluation of the school.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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	2	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?	1	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	1	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	1	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for making it so enjoyable. We agree with you and your parents/carers that the school is good and meets your different needs and there are many other things we particularly liked:

* your behaviour and attitudes to your learning are excellent* you are all extremely well cared for and supported by all adults in the school* you enjoy coming to school, are happy in your lessons and make good, progress, towards your individual targets* your teachers and support staff work really well together and ensure your lessons are interesting and fun so you can do your best* your headteacher and all the staff listen carefully to you and are always thinking what they can do to make your time in school even better * your school knows what it is good at and how it can improve even more* the school works really well with people outside of school to ensure you get the best support to help you improve* school governors know the school really well and help to ensure it keeps improving.

The school understands that you need to use computers more in lessons to support your learning in all subjects. Once again, thank you for being so friendly and making our visit such a pleasant one.

Yours sincerely

M J Smith

Lead Inspector