



Bedelsford School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102621
Local Authority Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number 286442
Inspection date 14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Greg Sorrell

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Grange Road
School category	Foundation		Kingston Upon Thames
Age range of pupils	2-16		KT1 2QZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8546 9838
Number on roll (school)	44	Fax number	020 8296 9238
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Peter Holmes
		Headteacher	Angela Evans
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Bedelsford School provides education for 60 children with physical disabilities, profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex medical needs (PMLD). Nearly half of the pupils are from Kingston and the rest are from seven neighbouring London boroughs. Approximately half of the pupils have English as an additional language. All have statements of special educational need and the majority have additional medical needs. In response to a recent strategic local authority review, the school's roll is changing to include more pupils with PMLD.

The school works in partnership with a number of local mainstream and special schools. The school has been awarded Investors in People status and the Healthy Schools Award. The headteacher's very recent appointment follows changes in leadership since the last inspection including a two term period without a permanent headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bedelsford School is a good school due to the pupils' good achievement, the good quality of teaching and the outstanding pupils' personal development and well-being. These aspects of the school have remained strong despite significant periods of time since the last inspection without a permanent headteacher. The quality of leadership, management and governance is satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has made a good start and has a good understanding of how to move the school forward.

All pupils show they enjoy school by regular attendance, trying hard in lessons and behaving well. The children in the nursery achieve well in the early learning goals and pupils make good progress in relation to targets set for them in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education (PSHE), irrespective of their special educational needs. In Key Stage 4, pupils also achieve well in entry level examinations. They contribute to their own safety as they show consideration for others, such as helping peers in wheelchairs to move around the school and show patience when their movement is slow. Regular participation in physical activity such as swimming enables them to stay fit as does their knowledge of healthy foods. The pupils express their views day to day to well trusted adults and enjoy making contributions to the school council and running mini-enterprise activities. They make supported yet informed choices about life after school and seek to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in colleges of further education.

Typically, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some outstanding features, notably communication about the lesson content and a wide range of effective teaching styles. Teaching assistants play a highly significant role in ensuring individuals' needs are met. Care and guidance for pupils are good. Therapists and nursing staff are highly effective in maximising the pupils' access to education.

The curriculum is good with some strong features such as the emphasis on basic skills, ICT, PSHE, work-related learning and sensory education. Extra-curricular activities during lunch-time and the residential trip enrich the curriculum.

The recently appointed headteacher enjoys the confidence of staff, governors and parents. Self-evaluation is satisfactory but is not yet systematically involving all staff or governors. The use of assessment by teachers is good although better use should be made of whole school data. Development planning is satisfactory and would be improved by greater emphasis on the governors' monitoring role.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of all managers and all governors in the school's systematic review of its effectiveness.
- Improve the use of whole school assessment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of children in the nursery and pupils in the school is good. The children make good progress in the early learning goals and the pupils achieve well against the targets set for them in English, mathematics, science, ICT and PSHE. Many older pupils gain success in Entry Level examinations in a similar range of subjects. When appropriate, the most academically able pupils access local mainstream schools to further their learning. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well in work related learning including work experience within the school and in the community.

The progress that pupils make is due to effective teaching and a strong commitment to meeting all their needs. There are no significant differences in the progress of any particular groups, including those with English as an additional language or different special educational needs. The only exception is when pupils' medical conditions mean that long-term hospitalisation is necessary, although on their return, the school makes appropriate adjustments to their individual curriculum. Inevitably, due to the pupils' special educational needs, the standards reached at the school when compared to mainstream schools are low.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's view that the pupils' personal development and well-being is excellent is well founded. The pupils enjoy school and their attendance is excellent. The vast majority of absence is due to illness due to long-term medical conditions which sometimes require hospitalisation. In lessons and breaks, including lunch-times, they show confidence and security with the adults who support them.

Some pupils have behavioural difficulties which diminish due to sensitive management by staff and also by developing maturity when possible. As a result of the pupils' excellent response to their environment, their behaviour is excellent and no exclusions from school have been required.

The pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided for them, such as work experience, mini-enterprises and bi-annual residential experiences to achieve well and acquire a good knowledge of themselves. Significantly, this aids their personal development, particularly their economic well-being and informed choice of destinations on leaving school. They also respond extremely well to physical education and therapies in addition to the emphasis on staying healthy and avoiding things that may be harmful.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Particular strengths are their moral and social development in response to adult role-modelling. Their awareness of other cultures is an improvement since the last inspection. Some pupils hold responsibilities which help the school to run smoothly, for example, membership of the school council resulting in some positive contributions to the school's development plan.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good and results in the pupils' good achievement. Effective use is made of communication skills via a wide range of methods including, signing, symbols, pictures and electronic devices. The use of the 'assessment for learning' strategy is good. Lesson objectives are clearly given at the start of lessons and these are referred to at the end of lessons to enable staff and pupils to know what has been learned. The teaching strategies take good account of pupils' language development, including those for whom English is an additional language.

Assessment of learning is thorough and this enables staff to have a good understanding of pupils' attainment, and use this effectively to plan lessons. Staff have responded well to appropriate training in the use of ICT and this is much improved since the last inspection, although additional training is required to maximise use of interactive whiteboards. The quality of teaching is typified by staff using a wide range of teaching and learning styles to communicate relevant content. On rare occasions these strong features are not so evident and lesson planning lacks sufficient precision.

Relationships with pupils are very strong and encourage excellent attitudes to learning and behaviour. Effective use is also made of external specialists, for example, therapists and a counsellor, to support learning and pupils' additional needs. The close working relationship between teachers and teaching assistants has a significant impact on pupils' learning. Where teachers lead lessons, assistants are well briefed and support pupils well. An increasing amount of good teaching for individuals is provided by teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, including that for children's early learning goals in the foundation stage. In all key stages it has a strong focus on communication, literacy, numeracy and PSHE. Older pupils have access to accredited courses and work related learning. Where appropriate, pupils follow a sensory curriculum that allows them to maximise experiences through their senses. Opportunities to use ICT in order to achieve effective communication across the curriculum are good. Access to physical and creative activities, including hydrotherapy and swimming, aid the pupils' health, fitness and social development.

The school makes good use of national and local strategies to increase the curriculum's relevance to the changing needs of the pupils, which reflects an excellent commitment to equality of opportunity. All pupils have individual timetables which include whole class learning as well as specific time to address their physical, emotional and medical needs. Good use is also made of mini-enterprises to develop economic awareness. The range of accreditation for older pupils is narrow, although the school has identified the need to re-instate vocational awards that were previously available. Visits to the

local community and attendance at local schools and a college of further education enhance their citizenship education.

The provision of an annual residential experience and a wide range of extra-curricular lunch-time clubs enrich the curriculum considerably. The school makes good use of its accommodation and has suitable plans to improve its specialist facilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, advice and guidance to safeguard pupils is good. Child protection procedures are well known and followed by all staff. Recent training, including manual handling, to meet the needs of pupils with additional special educational needs helps to ensure good provision as the school changes its role.

Staff ensure that pupils are safe, and the whole school community ensures that pupils with physical disabilities are afforded total respect and consideration. The appointment of a part-time counsellor is a good indicator of the considerable lengths to which the school will go to provide appropriate support when needs arise. Appropriate guidance is provided in relation to academic progress in annual reviews and reports; options on leaving school are discussed with Connexions advisors. Analysis of whole school assessment data to monitor the progress of different groups is at an early stage. However, the liaison with on-site nursing staff, to monitor vulnerable pupils, including those with complex, additional medical needs is excellent. Other therapists and social workers provide an integrated service which maximises the pupils' access to education and assists their academic achievement and development of independence. Translators are provided as appropriate for parents during annual reviews. The recently appointed headteacher has improved the management of external agencies, although it is too early to gauge its impact on pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The school has experienced significant disruption in its leadership and management since the last inspection. The very recently appointed headteacher has had an extremely positive impact on staff morale and organisation in a short time. In view of the short time in post, the school's capacity for further improvement can only be judged as satisfactory. School development since the last inspection has not stood still, although the lack of a permanent headteacher has slowed the rate of whole school improvement.

Together, with the newly formed senior management team, the headteacher has a good understanding of the school's effectiveness and future role. Systems for self-evaluation are adequate but rely more on teachers' and managers' professional judgement rather than systematic evaluation. Subject leaders have ensured that the school has not lost focus on the learning, notably literacy, numeracy, ICT and sensory education. Revised subject improvement plans are in development and whole school

assessment data from core subjects, whilst comprehensive, are not currently used to best effect.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the quality of teaching, care and pupils' achievement has proved resilient to the school's challenging times. Performance management is effective and the need to systematically include teaching assistants has been recognised and welcomed by staff.

In recognition of the need to adapt its curriculum and accommodation in view of its changing intake, firm plans have been made to make the best use of resources; for example, improving the facilities for practical subjects and pupils' independence.

Many staff report that the management of relationships with other agencies to support the pupils is much improved. Strong encouragement of parental involvement is also evidenced by good attendance at annual reviews, and by a survey of their views. A very small minority would like to become more involved, although the overwhelming majority endorse all aspects of the school's work. One parent wrote, 'The management of the school has improved 110% since the new headteacher's arrival.' Another wrote, 'The school is caring'.

Current priorities in the development plan are relevant to the school's present and future needs. All aspects are appropriate but success criteria are not always clear and the governors' monitoring role, particularly in relation to achievement is underemphasised. Nevertheless, the governors possess considerable skills that support the school's continued improvement.

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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	4
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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 making me so welcome. I am very pleased to say that you go to a good school! It is clear from your good progress that you play your part too, as well as all the staff. Your school is a pleasant place to be and it's clear that you enjoy being there! As I walked around the school and went in to lessons, I was impressed by the way you behaved, worked hard and did your best. I thought the way you help each other to get around the school and the respect shown to everyone was excellent.

I know your student council gives you a chance to say what you think about school and it is also clear that you feel safe and able to let staff know how you feel at all times during the day.

I was pleased with your range of lessons and I know you like trips away! I enjoyed watching some of you use computers to write about yourselves and the joy on your faces as you sang and listened to music was fantastic for me to see! It's also clear to see how much you benefit from going to college and doing work experience.

I know Mrs Evans has only been there a short time, but she has made a very good start in helping the school. I'm asking Mrs Evans to do a couple of things to help the school further. One is to involve even more teachers and governors in keeping a check on how the school is doing. The other is to make even better use of the information they have about how your progress in lessons. These things should enable your school to become even better in the future.

Yours sincerely

Greg SorrellLead inspector