



# Bedford Road Lower School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109461  
**Local Authority** BEDFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288383  
**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Geof Timms

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hillgrounds Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Kempston, Kempston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9		Bedford, Bedfordshire
			MK42 8QH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 851011
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	274	<b>Fax number</b>	01234 301313
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr L Stewart
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Gould
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 June 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4–9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 9–10 October 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 288383
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This popular school is larger than average for its type. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are also pupils from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Children's attainment on starting school is wide ranging but many have knowledge and skills that are well below normal expectations. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average overall, but is high enough in some year groups to affect standards. An above average number of pupils are eligible to free school meals.

## 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 a good school. It provides an effective education and helps pupils to achieve well in their learning and in their personal development. In its last self-evaluation, the school graded itself more modestly than this. However, inspection evidence and that collected more recently by the staff shows that the school has made good progress in several important areas since the current leadership team was appointed. The school provides good value for money. Many children have low levels of knowledge and skills when they start at the school and some speak very little English. Other barriers to the learning for some children are poor attendance levels and limited social skills. The school works successfully to improve these, especially through the excellent work of the nurture group, and as a result, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are cared for well and are happy in school. This view is supported by their parents, especially those with children who are an early stage of speaking English, and whose children have recently started at the school. Parents feel valued. One said 'The headteacher has done her utmost to make parents feel part of the school.' Standards are rising. The Foundation Stage provision is good and the children progress well in the Reception classes, especially in their personal and social skills and in their communication and language skills. Even so, when they start in Year 1 many are still below the levels normally expected at that age. Good teaching throughout the school helps pupils to make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics, so that standards are broadly in line with those expected by the time they leave the school. However, writing skills often remain below those expected. One reason for the lower standards in writing is that the pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length and in other subjects. The school's efforts to raise standards are beginning to take effect but it is too early for these to be reflected in improved results. Teaching is good, with examples of outstanding lessons in Year 4, when activities capture the interest of pupils. The school does not do enough to share this excellent practice or to make the learning more interesting by creating meaningful links between subjects. The tracking of individual pupils has improved greatly. Leaders now assess accurately how well pupils in each class are progressing each term and target support efficiently for those pupils needing additional help. Teachers have also improved their use of assessment and the marking of pupils' work. They regularly share with pupils exactly what is expected of them in lessons in order to improve their learning. Teaching, standards and other aspects of the school have improved rapidly because the leadership and management of the headteacher, assistant headteacher and leadership team are good. They are strongly focused on raising standards and offering the best possible support to the pupils and their parents. Recent changes to subject leadership mean that some staff require more training to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. In particular, they need more opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Even so, the rate of improvement over the last two years shows clearly that the school is well placed to improve further.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in pupils' writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects. - Develop subject leadership skills through further training and more extensive opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning in subjects. - Build on existing good practice in making lessons interesting and providing effective links between subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Although standards at the end of Year 4 are broadly average, pupils achieve well, given their below and, for some, well below average attainment on starting school. Progress is good in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. Pupils who speak English in addition to their home language often make very good progress and this is reflected in their good all-around performance and in test results. However, pupils' progress in writing, while satisfactory, does not enable them to catch up sufficiently, so their skills remain below average. The overall trend in test results at the end of Year 2 has been upward over recent years but varies from year to year because of variations in ability between intake groups. In the current Year 2, for example, over a quarter of the pupils in one class have learning or social difficulties. Standards in this class are likely to be lower, even though the excellent nurture group provides outstanding support and is having a very positive impact on their achievement. In addition to the core subjects, pupils also do well in art and design, where standards are often above national expectations.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They behave well in lessons and at playtimes because supervision procedures are clear and consistent. Pupils say that the small amount of challenging behaviour is well managed by teachers and its impact lessened. They enjoy school and feel safe. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The effective school council enables pupils to make a good contribution to school life. Attendance has been below average for a number of years. The school is working hard with families to ensure that they recognise the importance of regular attendance.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

In most lessons, teaching and learning are good. There are some outstanding lessons, especially in Year 4, where pupils learn rapidly. Teaching and learning are effective

because new assessment procedures and the careful tracking of pupils' achievement enable teachers to pitch the work at the correct level for pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' work and the setting of learning targets is improving quickly, so that the pupils themselves have a growing understanding of how to improve. Consequently, most pupils work hard, achieve well and their behaviour in lessons is good. In the few lessons where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning is too slow and activities are not interesting enough to bring the best out of the pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Curricular planning is satisfactory, but the school is currently finding ways of linking subjects more coherently. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and is already planned in this way, with termly themes and lots of practical activities which the children enjoy. Efforts are now being made to extend this to other year groups and to place literacy and numeracy at the heart of such changes. This is part of a necessary drive to make lessons more relevant and interesting to pupils. While few outside visits are made, the curriculum is enriched satisfactorily by clubs, instrumental tuition and interesting visitors. For example, pupils learn to grow a range of flowers, vegetables and fruit in the gardening club. The food harvested is due to be a centrepiece for the harvest festival and those in the nurture group enjoy their toast with jam made with their home-grown blackcurrants.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect is good because the school has effective systems for providing both academic and personal guidance for pupils. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust, clear and adhered to. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Pupils and their parents correctly feel that the school provides a safe environment. A major strength is in the excellent provision for emotionally vulnerable children, through the nurture group, which helps them to feel secure, to get on together and to enjoy school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, assistant headteacher and senior leadership team are providing very clear direction to the work of the school. They are correctly focused on raising standards and on doing the best possible for all of the children. To achieve these ends the school is willing to take on new ideas and try out different methods, although the school has not yet developed sufficiently effective provision for gifted and talented pupils. The school is part of a local network of schools which is proving a good way sharing effective practice. The governing body is good and is supportive of the school and also keen to see standards rise. There have been significant changes to the staffing recently.

Consequently, a number of subject leaders are new to the role and need additional training in order to be able to monitor their subjects effectively.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	2
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**

11 October 2006 Dear Children Bedford Road Lower School, Hillgrounds Road, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK42 8QH Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing what you enjoy about school. This was very helpful to us. We think your school is good. You have some good teachers who help you to learn well, and you make good progress. Most of you behave well and you told us that you don't like it when others are not well behaved. When you are attentive in lessons it helps your teachers to help you learn. You are doing well in reading and mathematics, and we liked a lot of the art work you have done. We hope Year 2 carry on weaving in such a careful and patient way! Mrs Gould and other adults at your school are all working hard to make the school successful and to help you to get even better at your work. We think there are three things they can do to make the school even better: - Help you improve your writing. - Make sure the teachers help each other and share the good things they do. - Make sure the lessons are always interesting and the work you are given is suitable for you. You are lucky to be at Bedford Road Lower School and I hope you will carry on working hard and enjoy your time there. Yours sincerely Geof Timms Lead inspector