



Bowerdean Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110199
Local Authority Buckinghamshire
Inspection number 288597
Inspection date 9 January 2007
Reporting inspector Sean O'Toole

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Gordon Road
School category	Maintained		High Wycombe
Age range of pupils	3-5		HP13 6HR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01494 521941
Number on roll (school)	85	Fax number	01494 521941
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Karen Bates
		Headteacher	Mrs Tara Wright
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

Description of the school

Bowerdean Nursery draws children from a wide range of cultural and economic backgrounds. Attainment on admission is low and most children have levels of language which are significantly below those expected for their age. Almost three quarters of the children come from minority ethnic backgrounds. About a third speaks English as an additional language and their main languages are Panjabi or Urdu. A small percentage has learning difficulties. Children start at the Nursery following their third birthday.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Bowerdean provides an excellent standard of education which enables children of all abilities and backgrounds to thrive. Underpinning the work of the school is the belief that every child is special and deserves individual attention. One parent, summing up the views of many wrote, 'My daughter has come on in leaps and bounds and the credit goes to the staff with their caring nature and tender touch which encourages all to make the most of the Nursery'. Because of these attributes, children make exceptional growth in their personal, social and emotional development which equips them very well for their futures.

It is obvious from the moment the doors open and the children rush in that this is a happy and lively place where learning is fun. Children quickly grow in confidence as the staff assess their personalities and skills and encourage them to have a go. As a result, achievement is outstanding and progress in almost all of the areas of learning is exceptional. By the time they leave the school, children are working at levels which are in advance of those expected for their age in creative, personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Their mathematical development is about the level expected but more remains to be done to boost the children's knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and skills in using number.

The staff use the excellent and vibrant curriculum to stimulate learning both inside and out of doors. Creativity underpins the work of the school and the ways that staff use the children's ideas enrich learning. Teaching is of high calibre because of incisive assessment which helps staff to identify the individual's needs. Staff have excellent relationships with the children and inspire confidence and success. Consequently, the children's behaviour and attitudes are exemplary and contribute much to learning.

Led by the highly competent headteacher, the staff are always looking for ways to improve the school. They share a deep commitment to providing high quality and this is reflected in the drive to raise standards further and the ways in which the school has built upon its reputation over the years. There is clear evidence of outstanding capacity to build on the school's strengths. Governors strongly support the school but their involvement in evaluating its work is underdeveloped. Parents rightly express high levels of confidence in the staff and the care they provide. One parent said, 'Children are at the heart of this school. This is a very special place where everyone is made to feel special'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for the children to learn mathematical vocabulary and to improve their skills in using numbers.
- Sharpen the governors' skills in evaluating the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities make excellent progress and become competent and confident learners. They are especially successful in their personal, social and emotional development responding with enthusiasm and interest to all that the Nursery offers. Language skills improve rapidly because there is very focused support and a wealth of opportunities for children to practise speaking and listening and to start the process of learning to read and write. Children at an early stage of learning English are drawn into all the Nursery offers and because of intensive support make excellent gains in learning new words. Those with learning difficulties make rapid progress in meeting their targets because of the practical ways that staff use to instil learning, such as the use of puppets, games and stories.

Achievement is outstanding and standards in most of the areas of learning are above those expected for the children's age. Creative development is especially good and the children thrive on the rich opportunities available to paint draw, sing, make music and dance. Children's mathematical development is not quite as advanced as the other areas of learning. Although standards in mathematics are appropriate for the children's age there are some gaps in the children's understanding of mathematical vocabulary and calculating skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. They quickly become confident enough to work independently and grasp the importance of working with others. Boys and girls show much curiosity and enthusiasm, excitedly exploring the wealth of opportunities provided. They remain busy throughout sessions, persevering with tasks and responding to encouragement which spurs them on to do even better. Positive attitudes, excellent relationships and friendships contribute much to the purposeful ethos in the school and the children's awareness of working in a community. They particularly enjoy the opportunities to show their work to visitors. Behaviour is exemplary and children show much sensitive concern for others.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Local visits and the extensive opportunities to learn about different traditions, cultures and celebrations prepare them very well for life in the wider world. Their excellent progress in basic skills, and especially in learning how to learn, also get them ready for the next stage of their education. The Rainbow Cafe was a huge success in introducing children and their parents to foods from around the world and contributed much to an understanding of healthy lifestyles. They enjoy healthy snacks and meals, and exercise energetically. Children work safely, taking care of resources and equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are of high quality. Staff have an excellent knowledge of how young children learn and they apply this to their planning to support individuals. This works exceptionally well for those with learning difficulties, as staff focus on specific areas for development and set sharp and achievable targets. Skilful teaching in the sensory room brings the less confident out of their shells and stimulates much talk and collaboration. Similarly, there is excellent support for those at an early stage of learning English. Staff use a wide range of resources and activities to improve speaking and this enables these children to participate fully in every aspect of the curriculum.

A particular strength is the way that planning includes the children's ideas and interests and allows for a balance between adults guiding, and children choosing activities. Boys' language learning is enriched through the provision of many outdoor activities linked to early reading and writing. Children love learning and respond delightedly in the circle times at the start of the session. They go on to apply themselves enthusiastically maintaining high levels of concentration.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum promotes meaningful and fun-filled learning. The knowledgeable staff plan thoroughly and not a moment is wasted. Children busily settle to work and are eager to explore all the Nursery offers. Creativity is fostered and results in high levels of achievement in art and music. As a parent wrote, 'The art is always so exciting and the Nursery is visually stimulating, which is important and brings a smile to my face'. The staff capitalise on the children's enthusiasm for creative work and use every opportunity to enhance their language. Because the staff value everyone's contribution and ideas, children make exceptional gains in their personal development. Children with learning difficulties are nurtured and supported very effectively. Those at an early stage of learning English love their daily language sessions which help them to grow in confidence in speaking in a small group. The school provides excellent opportunities for the children to learn about life in the local and worldwide communities by inviting visitors with a huge variety of skills. It also reaches out to the community through its art and music weeks where children's work is celebrated.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents speak highly of every aspect of the school's work and are delighted with the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. Staff are highly skilled in supporting and encouraging the children, making excellent use of the well focused assessment system to guide the children on the next steps in their learning. They are vigilant in tracking the progress of children of all abilities and backgrounds and are knowledgeable

about all aspects of child protection. Risk assessments are thorough and health and safety matters receive immediate attention. All staff have been checked for their suitability for working with children. There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in family learning which contribute much to making the school a happy, safe and purposeful place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because of the excellent track record in maintaining a high quality of education and the outstanding levels of care. The headteacher has successfully built a high performing team who show great commitment to school improvement. Evaluation is perceptive and self critical so that there is no room for complacency. For example, the school has identified the need to raise standards in mathematical development and has successfully incorporated this objective into its daily provision. Consequently, standards are rising. The leadership has created a vibrant ethos which is reflected in the imaginative curriculum and stimulating teaching, resulting in high levels of achievement by children of all abilities and backgrounds.

Governors offer much support and encouragement but are aware of their shortcomings in assessing the school's work and in monitoring its initiatives. Finances are managed robustly and used to provide high quality staffing and resources. Long-term goals are clearly stated in a useful development plan which provides a strong focus on improvement and which includes measures to track success. Children's needs are always put first. Staff are good at listening and responding to parents' views. Through the Parents as First Teachers project they involve families very well in their children's education.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

I enjoyed my visit to your school very much. Thank you for helping me to find out about it. I really enjoyed looking at your work and joining in some of the exciting things you do. I know that your mums and dads think that the Nursery is a very special place and I agree with them.

There are lots of wonderful things about your Nursery:

- you are very good at working hard, helping each other and listening to your teachers
- you make sure that everyone in the school has a friend
- the teachers care about you very much and make each session really interesting
- everyone in the Nursery works together to make it an exciting place
- those of you that need extra help always get it
- you are very successful in learning how to do many things and especially good at painting, singing and talking about your work.

I have asked the teachers to help you more with counting and learning new words about numbers. I have also asked the governors to get to know the school even better.

I know that you love coming to school and hope that you are always as happy.

Sean O'Toole

Lead inspector