



Bourton Meadow School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110397
Local Authority Buckinghamshire
Inspection number 288656
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Burleigh Piece
School category	Community		Linden Village
Age range of pupils	3-11		Buckingham MK18 7HX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01280 823374
Number on roll (school)	543	Fax number	01280 823988
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ian Payne
		Headteacher	Mrs G R Race
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Bourton Meadow is a large primary school located in a residential area. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and are generally from advantaged home circumstances. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Bourton Meadow provides an outstanding education for its pupils. The parents and pupils hold their school in high regard. Their positive views are entirely justified. One parent summed up the views of many when writing, 'I think this is an outstanding school. The quality of teaching has been consistently stimulating and interesting for my child.'

The key to the school's success is its relentless focus on developing its pupils as confident, caring, independent and thoughtful learners.

Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to their education. When children begin school at the age of three their attainment is above what is normally expected at this age. They make rapid progress because of the high quality of teaching and the stimulating curriculum. By the time they move into Year 1, their attainment is well above average.

When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently high. The school's high expectations for all of its pupils in all areas of learning are evident, for example, in the quality of pupils' instrumental performance and the excellent standard of singing. Pupils' excellent all-round progress is the result of first-rate teaching, the wide range of stimulating and exciting activities and the close and rigorous monitoring of their performance.

A further important factor in the school's success is the excellent climate for learning evident in all classes. This stems from the outstanding personal development and well-being of the pupils.

This is a very inclusive school in which children's individual talents are developed and celebrated. They are exceptionally well cared for and feel safe and happy. The school provides excellent academic guidance for its pupils by setting clear and challenging targets for each of them to achieve. These include separate, specific targets to help guide the performance of gifted and talented pupils. The school is able to do this because it has developed comprehensive systems for checking on what individual pupils know and can do.

The driving force behind the school's success is the very high quality of leadership at all levels. In particular, the headteacher gives outstanding direction for the work of the school. She receives excellent support from the committed and highly professional staff and governors. Under her dynamic leadership, the management team ensures that this is not a school that rests on its laurels, but is constantly looking for ways to improve even more. Its innovative approach to developing the curriculum is a good example of this.

Although standards are consistently high in all subjects, they are not quite as good in mathematics as they are in English and science. The school has set out a clear plan of action to remedy this situation. The quality of this response, together with the way the school has maintained high standards is a clear indication of the school's outstanding capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to an even higher level.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The achievement of pupils is excellent, and standards are high. Pupils make excellent progress overall, regardless of gender or ethnicity.

Last year the school experienced a dip in the achievement of its Year 6 pupils. As a result, it failed to meet the challenging targets for its performance in the national tests. Nonetheless, standards remained high. This dip was caused by a combination of issues relating to work being done to further improve the curriculum together with the deployment of staff. The school's quick response in remedying the situation has ensured that it is now set to continue the trend of good year-on-year improvements in the rates of progress made by pupils.

The current group of pupils in Year 6 is on course to meet challenging targets set for their performance at the end of the school year. These are at the same high level as those set in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all aspects of school life. Particularly noteworthy is their excellent social development. Pupils are confident, articulate, and value one another's views. Attendance rates are consistently well above the national average, and illustrate pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes towards their school. When asked if there were any aspects of school life that they felt could be improved, one pupil commented, 'The school day really isn't long enough!'

Behaviour is good. Most pupils behave impeccably at all times, but pupils say that there are occasional instances of bullying which are generally caused by a small minority. However, they also feel that whenever bullying does occur, the school deals with it quickly and sensitively. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe, and have good knowledge about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They always eat healthily when taking school meals. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education and for a future as life-long learners. They have high levels of competence in basic skills, and are very good at applying these skills in their work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The school's view that teaching and learning are most often good or outstanding was confirmed by the inspection. Most teachers are extremely skilled practitioners.

Particularly noteworthy features of lessons are the pace of learning and the attention and enjoyment shown by all pupils. This occurs because teachers are very good at making their lessons interesting. They know their pupils' learning needs very well. As a result, they pitch work at different levels or present it in different ways so that pupils of all abilities are given achievable challenges. Skilled classroom assistants work well in partnership with teachers and give good quality help to pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A great deal of thought has been put into developing a curriculum that provides excellent opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in literacy and numeracy across a range of subjects. The thematic approach adopted by the school also helps make learning more relevant for pupils, and captures their interest. The wide range of out-of-school activities is an excellent feature, and is greatly appreciated by the pupils. Most attend at least one of the clubs on offer. In addition, the school ensures that visits to places of interest or visitors to the school add enjoyment to pupils' learning. For example, one pupil spoke enthusiastically about a visit to Sulgrave Manor when learning about Tudor times, while children in the Foundation Stage were keen to talk about their first-hand experience of owls provided by a visitor to the school. A particularly noteworthy feature of the curriculum is the provision of tuition in a wide range of musical instruments. As part of this, all pupils in Year 3 have violin lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent pastoral care for its pupils. The lunchtime menus provide a choice of healthy meals for pupils. All pupils interviewed said that they really enjoyed the food. There are regular opportunities for pupils to take exercise before, during, and at the end of the school day. A number of parents expressed their appreciation of the high standard of sports coaching provided.

The quality of academic guidance given to pupils is also excellent. This is based on thorough systems for assessing each pupil's academic performance. All pupils have targets to reach, and their progress in meeting them is regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The impact of leadership is seen in the excellent progress made by the pupils. The senior managers ensure that the effectiveness of the school is constantly reviewed and action taken whenever needed. The governors are well informed and successfully fulfil their role as critical friends. Throughout the school, there is a strong sense of teamwork, and an exceptionally good commitment to continuous improvement.

The leadership of the school ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability, are fully included and equally valued. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are able to play a full part in activities because of the extra help they are given. Those with particular talents have these recognised and developed. For instance, the 'mega-maths' group, provided pupils in assembly with an entertaining report about their work in exploring the properties of pi - the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

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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	2
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	1
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	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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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	1
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 helping me so much when I came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. I particularly enjoyed looking at your work and talking to some of you during your lessons and at break time.

I agree with your parents that you go to an outstanding school.

There is so much I like about your school that I can't mention everything, so here is a list of what I think are the most important things.

- You do really well in your work, and when you leave school at the end of Year 6 your results are always better than those of most other schools. You should be very proud of this.
- Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on really well with each other.
- You learn a lot in lessons because the teaching you are given is excellent.
- Your teachers are very good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after.
- Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school do an excellent job and make sure that you get the very best education.

I really enjoyed hearing your instrumental performance in assembly and listening to you sing. I would also like to say a special 'thank you' to Year 6 for the biscuits. They were delicious!

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. One of the things that they want to do is to try to improve your work in mathematics. I agree that this is a good idea. I'm sure that you are ready for the challenge!

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Thompson

Lead Inspector