



Bourne County Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114473
Local Authority East Sussex
Inspection number 289927
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Martin James

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Melbourne Road
School category	Community		Eastbourne
Age range of pupils	3–11		BN22 8BD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01323 724729
Number on roll (school)	446	Fax number	01323 411638
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Barbara Clark
		Headteacher	David Swales
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007	Inspection number 289927
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bourne Primary School is much larger than most primary schools. The number of pupils for whom English is not their first language is well above average, with as many as 35 different languages spoken by pupils in the school. There is a very significant movement of pupils in and out of the school during the year, with some pupils only remaining in the school for a short time. Many of these pupils speak little or no English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory; it also has a number of strengths. Parents are very positive about the school, and what it provides. Several commented on how much they valued the commitment and hard work of the staff. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and they benefit from the good curriculum, which includes an exceptional range of visits and clubs. Their behaviour and attitudes to work are good. The school's care, guidance and support for its pupils are satisfactory overall, but pastoral care is good, and pupils' safety is a priority. The school is especially caring of those pupils who join the school at different times during the year. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, with spiritual and cultural development being much improved since the previous inspection.

Standards are below average, but satisfactory teaching and learning mean pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When children start school, their knowledge and skills are below average, but exceptionally low in language skills and in their personal and social development. Children make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage. Although by Year 6 standards overall are below average, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Language skills remain low, mainly because a large number of pupils join the school who speak little or no English. Whilst achievement overall is satisfactory, higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they might because they are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and those of the headteacher are good. The headteacher and other senior members of staff form a dedicated team, who realise that more needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement. For example, the school has a comprehensive range of tracking procedures and assessment data, but they have not previously been used effectively to check pupils' progress and identify any possible underachievement. A new management structure is now in place, with senior leaders currently helping to develop the expertise of staff in analysing data, to ensure that teachers can help all pupils achieve as well as they can.

All staff and governors demonstrate a commitment to improving the school. Self-evaluation is accurate in its identification of areas of strength, as well as in outlining areas for development. For example, improvements in marking and the setting of clear targets are seen as vital in helping pupils understand for themselves how to improve their work. Governance has improved, and governors are now fully involved in planning and monitoring the schools' provision, although they have not yet held the school adequately to account for the progress being made by pupils. Recent initiatives, such as changes to the curriculum, are having a positive effect on provision and show that there is sound capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently provide opportunities to challenge and extend pupils in their work, especially higher attainers.

- Improve the quality of marking and target setting, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Provide a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress, to ensure that all pupils are achieving as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with attainment that is lower than expected, and particularly low in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of Reception the children have made satisfactory progress overall, and good progress in their personal development. By Year 2, overall standards are low, especially in reading and writing. However, pupils who remain in the school through Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. Standards are low because of the number of new pupils joining the school who have limited language skills. By Year 6 standards overall are below average. The well directed support provided for those pupils with little or no English helps them to make rapid progress, especially with their speaking skills. Nevertheless, children's English language skills remain at a low level and standards in English were exceptionally low in 2006. The school introduced changes to the curriculum, which are showing clear signs of improving standards in that subject. Pupils' progress overall is satisfactory, but more able pupils do not always do as well as they might.

The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with learning difficulties, and this helps them make steady progress towards the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is good, as are their attitudes to their work. Pupils are courteous and polite, and they really enjoy school. Pupils feel safe in school, and they report that bullying is not a problem. Attendance has improved through the actions taken by the school, but remains below average. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. In school they readily carry out a variety of responsibilities, and the school council has helped to improve, for example, lunchtime activities. The school is active in the wider community, with, for instance, pupils being involved in 'Eastbourne in Bloom'.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, for example they regularly eat fruit during break times. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is much improved, and is now good. Spirituality is well developed in the daily assemblies, and, in particular, pupils' cultural awareness is evident in the way pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds work and play together happily. The satisfactory progress that pupils make in basic skills prepares them adequately for their next stage of education, as well as later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Within the satisfactory teaching, there are some elements of strength. Most teachers plan interesting lessons. They make pupils aware of exactly what they are learning and why, and this helps pupils understand their work. Their explanations are clear and they make good use of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils' interest. Relationships throughout the school are good, and consequently pupils are keen to take an active part in the lessons. While there is generally a strong promotion of pupils' speaking and listening skills, in some lessons pupils have too few opportunities to discuss their work and show their understanding. Most tasks set for pupils provide a satisfactory level of challenge. However, the work provided for higher attaining pupils does not always extend them adequately. Marking lacks consistency across the school and does not always help pupils understand how they can improve their work.

Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because they are well informed and usefully deployed, providing pupils with good support and encouragement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils well. Most areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are well covered, with a strong emphasis on language and personal development. Physical development is less well catered for, because the outdoor facilities for Reception children are limited. However, plans are in place to improve this area. In Years 1 to 6 close attention is given to developing pupils' literacy skills. The school is currently putting much emphasis on improving pupils' writing, for example through providing many opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects, as well as to take part in drama activities to help develop their vocabulary. The school is frequently revising and developing the curriculum to ensure there are more practical activities and closer links between subjects. This has helped to engage pupils' interest and makes their work more relevant. For example, Year 5 pupils particularly enjoyed an activity on making an animated presentation on a food chain, linking art and science and using a computer. The school also makes good use of specialist teachers from other schools, to enhance provision in subjects such as music. The curriculum is well adapted to suit the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language. It is not always so well adapted for more able pupils.

The numerous school clubs, in sports and creative activities, as well as the many educational visits, are well supported and much enjoyed. The personal, social and health education programme helps pupils stay safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is dedicated to the pastoral care of its pupils, and this is a major strength. Rigorous procedures ensure that pupils are kept safe. Parents are confident that their children are well looked after. Staff know the pupils well and are strongly committed to their welfare. Good use of support services also benefits the provision for pupils. Child protection procedures are good, and risk assessments are carried out regularly. Health and safety are well monitored. The careful checking of pupils whose first language is not English helps to ensure they settle well and feel happy in school. Pupils are provided with targets for improving their work in literacy and numeracy, but some of these are too general and so pupils are not sufficiently helped to understand how to develop their work further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management overall are underpinned by the good leadership of the headteacher. He has been effective in creating a positive and caring atmosphere, and he has a clear vision for the future of the school, which is shared by other senior managers. Self-evaluation is accurate in its assessment of the school. Areas for improvement are accurately identified, and plans are well advanced for tackling them. A new management structure is in place, with clear emphasis on improving standards and achievement. A number of initiatives have been put in place, such as making better use of assessment data to identify possible underachievement. However, it is still too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.

The role of the new team leaders is developing well and they, too, have a clear understanding of how to take the school forward. The school is planning to provide them with more time to support their colleagues in implementing their plans, for example those related to improving marking and target setting. Governance is now satisfactory, which shows good improvement since the previous inspection, with all statutory requirements now met. Governors are involved in planning and monitoring various aspects of the school's provision. However, they do not currently monitor closely enough the progress that pupils make as they move through the school.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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 us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you, and we were very interested in what you had to tell us. We also really enjoyed joining you in assembly. I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school, what we think is good, and what we think needs to be made better. Overall, you are in a satisfactory school where you are making steady progress with your work.

Here are some of the highlights:

- You behave well and you help to make the school a happy place.
- You are sensible about making decisions on how to improve your school.
- You enjoy the wide range of extra activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- All adults in school care about you and look after you.
- You know all about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.

We have also asked the staff to do some things to make the school better:

- Make sure that the work teachers provide for you is hard enough for you all.
- Provide you with more comments in your books, and clearer targets, so that you have a better understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.
- Make sure that all adults who work with you keep a close check on your progress, to make sure you are doing as well as you can.

We wish you all good luck for the future.