



Bedmond Village Primary and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117248
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 290768
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Paul Cosway

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Meadow Way
School category	Community		Bedmond, Bedmond
Age range of pupils	3–11		Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire WD5 0RD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01923262825
Number on roll (school)	112	Fax number	01923 269397
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs.W Williams
		Headteacher	Mrs. D Wall
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006	Inspection number 290768
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving the village of Bedmond, outlying hamlets and a Travellers' site. The numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs are slightly above the national average. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. There is a higher proportion than nationally of children from Traveller communities and a relatively high proportion of pupils join or leave the school during a key stage, rather than at the start or end of it. The headteacher had been in post for just over a year at the time of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In this small, village school pupils benefit from small classes, spacious accommodation and beautiful grounds. It is a very well resourced school, with large fields, wild life areas, adventure playground equipment, a new computer suite and library, a separate hall and dining room. These facilities are used well to promote healthy exercise as well as learning. In addition, every child is known to all staff and the levels of care are high. In the recent past, behaviour in some classes has been unsatisfactory and this has affected the progress that pupils have made. Some pupils enter the school with emotional difficulties or have a record of problems at other schools. The new headteacher has tackled these problems effectively. There are clear signs that behaviour is improving. It is now good overall and outstanding for the older pupils. Standards of attainment are gradually rising as a result of these improvements and they are now average overall. The findings of the inspection agree with the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness and value for money are satisfactory. This is an improving school and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils, especially older ones, have good attitudes towards learning and value the good systems of rewards that the school uses to encourage them to behave well and work hard. Pupils make sound progress from their starting point which is broadly average when they enter the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, children from Traveller communities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds also achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and most children achieve well. Teaching is satisfactory overall with good or outstanding features. This is enabling all pupils to make steady and acceptable progress. The headteacher is rightly encouraging teachers to have higher expectations of their pupils. She is aware that some pupils could achieve better in writing if the work in lessons challenged them more and they were given more precise guidance on how to improve their work. Personal development is good, fostered by positive and friendly relationships between the pupils and all the adults who work at the school. The pupils enjoy school, behave well and they feel well cared for and secure: 'Everyone is friendly and kind.' Parents are pleased their children attend this school; almost all are very positive about its work: 'A wonderful school!' Attendance, improved since the last inspection, is average, but would be better if families did not take holidays in term time. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there are signs that they are becoming increasingly effective. The new headteacher has rapidly identified what needs to be done to ensure that the school continues to improve, including developing the roles of subject leaders, some of whom are not yet monitoring teaching and its impact on learning rigorously enough. Issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Given the improved standards and behaviour, as well as the well-focused development planning, the school is well placed to become even more effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, especially in writing, and give pupils consistently good guidance across the school on how to improve their spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Develop teachers' middle management roles

so that they are able to monitor and improve work in their subject areas more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievements and standards are satisfactory overall. Children enter the Nursery and Reception class with broadly average skills. In the Foundation Stage and through Key Stage 1 they make satisfactory progress. Most leave the Reception with average skills and through Key Stage 1 they make good progress in numeracy and reading, but slower progress in developing writing skills. In the 2006 national tests for Year 2 pupils, no-one reached the higher Level 3, in writing, although several reached Level 3 in mathematics and reading. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. Many of the older pupils are now making good progress, but it is too early in the school year for recently introduced initiatives to have had a significant impact on the school's performance. Standards are average overall in English and mathematics. The results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2006 were close to the national average and show an improving trend over time. A close attention to detail in the marking of written work and high expectations of Year 5/6 teachers are having a positive effect on their pupils' writing standards, but this good practice is not as apparent further down the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Every child is known and valued. They enjoy school and respect all the adults who care for them and they are respected and loved in return. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils often work in small groups and co-operate well. By the end of Year 6 they have a good appreciation and understanding of their own culture and other major cultures and faiths. They help to devise rules and understand the reasons for them. They know how to stay safe and live healthy lives, enjoying the many opportunities that they have for healthy exercise. Effective work on bullying ensures that they know how to respond if they are faced with this issue. All are confident that their teachers and helpers will quickly sort out any problem that may arise. Behaviour is good overall. Some younger pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration for long periods. By Year 4, behaviour is good and the attitudes and behaviour of many pupils in Year 5 and 6 are outstanding. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and satisfactory levels of attainment in basic literacy and numeracy provide a satisfactory basis for pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is best for the oldest and youngest pupils, because it is clearly focused on their needs and on raising their attainment. In these classes, teachers have high expectations of standards of work and behaviour. Where classes are taught by less experienced teachers, the pace of work is slower. This is sometimes because classroom routines have not yet been fully established. Pupils have to be reminded what to do and how to behave. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enable teachers to make teaching points clearly and make learning more interesting for pupils. Learning objectives are clear and precise in all classes and assessment is used well in most subjects to help pupils to improve their work. Teaching assistants work well to help those who need extra support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is full provision for teaching literacy and numeracy, along with additional short sessions in the afternoons to improve spelling, reading and problem solving skills. There is excellent provision for teaching physical education, alongside good opportunities for geography, history and art. The ICT curriculum is being improved and the new ICT suite provides excellent facilities. The extensive grounds and the local environment are used well to extend the curriculum and there is a good range of clubs and educational visits, well supported by pupils. Pupils make good contributions to the local community, supporting the carnival and local charities, for example. The Foundation Stage provides a good balance of taught activities and educational play.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features. The school is very committed to the pupils' health, safety and welfare. Child Protection procedures are firmly in place. Pupils have complete trust in the staff, feel that they can discuss any problem with them and that it will be resolved. The buddy system is excellent; the pupils eat lunch in their buddy groups, for example. There is a strong programme of personal, social and health education. Good liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures that the support for pupils who need extra help is effective. Parents are fully involved in the work of the school and almost all report that communication with them is good and that the school listens to their concerns. All agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher is totally committed to the school and to the well-being of the pupils. She is determined to make the school more effective in ensuring that the pupils make good progress. She has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has produced a good improvement plan to bring about change. She has already been effective in improving behaviour and relationships with parents. There are signs that achievement and standards are beginning to rise, but the inspection came too early for there to be tangible evidence of sustained improvement. The headteacher is carrying a heavy workload in the absence of a deputy and she is aware of the need to develop the skills of the rest of the staff in the management and leadership of their areas of responsibility. Training has already begun and as a result some senior staff are making a strong contribution although the contribution of those who are newly in post or newly qualified is less well marked. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities to a satisfactory level but governors are growing more into their roles as the chairperson works with the headteacher to train them and clarify their responsibilities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	3
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?	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	2

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?	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	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

Dear Children Bedmond Village Primary and Nursery School, Meadow Way, Bedmond, WD5 0RD I enjoyed my visit to your school very much. Thank you for all the help you gave me and for your kindness in answering so many of my questions. It was lovely to see you enjoying your time in school so much. You like your lessons, your teachers and the friends and buddies you have. You are so lucky to have so much space to play in and so many games to play at lunchtime - and the food is excellent! No wonder you are so healthy! There are many nice things to say about your school. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and you are cared for well. You have a good range of subjects, clubs and visits. You all told me that you like school and your parents agree. Most of you work hard and behave well, but some of you need to try harder to improve your writing. I am asking the teachers to help your headteacher to improve the school even more. I know that they will, because everyone at the school wants the best for you all. Thank you again. Work hard and make the most of your time in this rather special school! Best wishes for the future, Paul Cosway Lead Inspector