

Bournehall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117296
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number	290788
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Beeden
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Sadler
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Bournehall Avenue Bushey Hertfordshire WD23 3AX
Telephone number	0208 9504438
Fax number	0208 4218290

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Attainment on entry to the Reception is above average in all areas of the children's development. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The very large majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds with four pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition. The school has gained an Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bournehall Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are good features in several areas including the personal development and pastoral care of the pupils. Most parents are pleased with the quality of care and education provided although a few have a range of mainly individual concerns. The school provides satisfactory value for money and a sound capacity to continue to improve. Inspection judgements are generally below those in the school's self-evaluation.

Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are above average especially in their self-confidence and ability to communicate with others. They settle happily to school routines and, when they enter Year 1, the majority exceed the targets expected for their age. Standards at the age of seven and 11 are above average overall. However, standards are variable and have dipped in the last two years. The value added to pupils' learning as they move through the school is little more than average. While the majority of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve satisfactorily, progress is inconsistent. Pupils across the school read very well but their skills in writing lag behind and some pupils do not achieve all they can in this area. Recent standards in mathematics have often been below those in English. The school has extended the opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics and is monitoring the situation well, so this is not an area of particular concern.

The personal development of pupils is good. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning which helps prepare them well for their future. There are effective opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities within the school community. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and develop a healthy lifestyle.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and there are several strong features. Across the school there is effective use of 'talk partners' for pupils to discuss their ideas with others. Teaching in Year 5 is outstanding and enables these pupils to make excellent progress. However, the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 2, is variable and does not enable pupils to make consistent progress as they move through the school. The curriculum is good with particular strengths in the way in which the range of additional activities enriches pupils' learning. The care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory overall. Within this overall judgement, pastoral care is good. Staff know and care for the pupils well, readily recognising when anyone needs additional support. Assessment routines are in the process of change and the present system for tracking pupils' progress is relatively new. However, the information available is not always used to provide all pupils with a consistently good level of challenge.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and knows the strengths and weaknesses in school provision. Governors are well led and governance is satisfactory overall. However, the school has not been successful in developing all senior roles well enough in driving school improvement. Some subject leaders are not sufficiently effective in identifying what improvements are still needed to boost achievement further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils achieve the best they are capable of, particularly in their writing.

- Improve the way teachers use information from assessments to consistently offer challenges to all pupils.
- Ensure the leadership team effectively monitors, evaluates and improves the work of the school in order to meet challenging targets.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in the Reception class are happy and enthusiastic young learners. Most have attended pre-school or nursery before joining Bournehall and have particularly good levels of confidence and readiness to communicate with those around them. Many have a great wish to read like their brothers, sisters and friends and set about learning how to master this and other skills with enthusiasm. They make progress in all areas of their learning that is generally good and when they enter Year 1, most exceed the targets expected for their age.

National tests and assessments at the age of seven show that pupils attain standards that are above average. Considerably more pupils do well in reading than seen nationally and the standards reached in reading have been consistently higher than in other areas. Writing and mathematical skills are not as advanced but are nevertheless above average. At the age of 11, standards are also often above average, but in 2006, were not as high as the previous four years in English, mathematics and science. Overall, pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make satisfactory, and at times good, progress. However, as they move through the school the rate of progress is not consistent because there is some variation in the quality of teaching and learning which affects overall achievement, particularly in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Children in the Foundation Stage relate well to adults and each other. Pupils care for others well, and initiate fundraising to support people in difficulties. They have a sound understanding of the richness and diversity of cultures in Britain. Pupils' attendance rates are good. They arrive punctually and quickly settle to work. Pupils behave well, have good attitudes to work and generally enjoy school. They know how to keep themselves safe and are confident that isolated instances of bullying are quickly resolved. They understand what racism is and have the skills to handle any issues. Pupils live healthy lives and the school council has contributed to the improvements to the lunches that are provided. They make a good contribution to the school's community, especially in Year 6, through, for example, the very well trained 'sports leaders' who work at lunchtimes with other pupils and the 'ambassadors' who show visitors around the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education because they work very well collaboratively in groups and have above average skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, it is inconsistent and ranges from outstanding in Year 5 to satisfactory in some other years. A strength across the school is the well-established strategy of encouraging pupils of all ages and abilities to discuss their ideas with a partner. This helps involve pupils in their learning, and builds their confidence and speaking skills well. Where teaching is exemplary this is because of excellent planning, explanations to pupils and challenging tasks that interest and motivate all abilities to try hard. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory, planning is not focused well enough on the expected levels of achievement and pupils are not clear enough about what they are to do and learn. At times teachers try to do too much in a lesson and use too many resources which limit the depth of the pupils' work or, conversely, in other lessons fail to use resources to help explain things well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the learning needs of different groups of pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good balance between interesting activities directed by adults and those chosen by the children. Recently, a small number of pupils have arrived at the school at an early stage of English language acquisition. Some staff have received specialist training in meeting the needs of these pupils but this has yet to be fully implemented. There is a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, and many pupils attend these. There are good enrichment activities including special weeks. For example, a painting from The National Gallery was the focus for the whole school's learning in different subjects. There are residential courses for Years 4 and 6, and French is taught in Year 3. The school has introduced the teaching of thinking skills, which are taught very effectively in some classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are effective in contributing to pupils' good personal development, but less successful in contributing to their academic guidance. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet requirements. There are good systems to encourage pupils to attend school frequently. Vulnerable pupils receive very good levels of care and support. Pupils value the times when they sit in a circle and discuss issues that concern them. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, enabling them to make similar progress to others. The system used for checking and tracking progress in English and mathematics is in the process of being changed, as the current system is not rigorous enough to help all achieve well. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of target setting to help pupils to learn but more could be done in this area to make the process even more focused. The marking of pupils work is good and pupils are very aware that 'tickled pink' highlighting reflects good work and 'green for growth' notes indicate what they need to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

While the overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory there are strengths and areas for further development within this overall judgment. The headteacher provides good leadership and works effectively with parents, staff and external agencies to ensure the smooth running of the school. The school's lead teacher provides exemplary teaching and is developing her new role as subject leader for mathematics very effectively. However, some senior roles are not well enough developed to ensure effectiveness in all areas. Subject leadership is also variable and not always successful in identifying what works well and where improvements are still needed. Staff have begun to focus more clearly upon refining assessment routines and their use of data to inform planning. However, as yet the use of such information is not well coordinated and does not support consistent improvement. The chair of governors is well informed about school provision and gives a good lead. The governing body is supportive and developing their role as a critical friend of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	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	2
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	2
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?	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.

Annex A

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

16 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Bournehall Primary School, Bournehall Avenue, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 3AX

Thank you very much for looking after us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed speaking to you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and at the meeting with the school council.

These are the things that we think are successful -

- We were very impressed with the responsibilities you undertake including those of you in Year 6 acting as sports leaders and school 'ambassadors'.
- We were pleased to see you sharing your ideas with your talk partners.
- You do well in your reading.
- Lots of you enjoy a good range of clubs and after school activities.

These are areas that we think could be improved -

- Some of you could make even more progress in several areas and particularly in your writing.
- Staff could use the information from assessing your work to make sure work is hard enough for you all.
- The staff should also check more carefully what happens in lessons and the quality of your work to identify what needs to be improved.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly towards us. You all contribute well to the life of the school and the local community. You can help the school to succeed even more by trying really hard all the time and especially with your writing.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead Inspector