

Bengeo Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117361
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	290809
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Libby Mountford
Headteacher	Mrs Kathleen Hallahan
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2001
School address	The Avenue Bengeo Hertford Hertfordshire SG14 3DX
Telephone number	01992 582765
Fax number	01992 504965

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bengoe Primary School is larger in size than other primary schools. Although the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, there are a small number from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils start at the school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are above those expected nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are below the national average. The school has recently gained the Healthy Schools Award and the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Mark for nursery education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The school has made a real effort to balance the aims of excellence and enjoyment for all children. The headteacher provides forward-looking and energetic leadership so that there is a clear vision for improvement. The school is popular and parents speak highly of it. One parent wrote, 'My children are very happy at the school and are making good progress. They really appreciate the trips, theme days and extra-curricular activities'.

Standards on entry are above average. Most pupils leave the school with well above average attainment which represents good progress. The further development of pupils' writing skills is rightly identified as an area for development for the school. The personal development of the pupils is good, mainly because of the good quality care and guidance they receive. The majority of pupils are well behaved and act as good representatives of the school. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils enjoy their time at school and develop into positive and friendly individuals. They make a significant contribution to the school and local community, and are well prepared for secondary education.

Assessment information is used well to track pupils' progress in order to identify underachievement. Teaching is good overall with some examples of outstanding practice. Effective teaching methods ensure that pupils are actively engaged in the lessons. Teachers use assessment information to plan lessons and meet the learning needs of the individual pupils. Curriculum provision is good with a wide variety of enrichment experiences. Theme days provide opportunities to integrate the subject areas and these are very popular with the pupils. Children gain a very good start to the school through outstanding provision in the Nursery. Display work in the classrooms and corridors provides a stimulating environment for learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team are well supported by the governors, who are fully involved in the strategic development of the school. The school greatly values the support staff and teaching assistants are used well to support the pupils. Most parents and carers are very happy with the school although a significant minority feel that there should be more opportunities to express their views on school improvement. The budget is managed well and the school provides good value for money. Self-evaluation is accurate and the headteacher is aware of areas for development. Bengoe Primary School has good capacity to improve even further as it moves towards the next stage of its development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the strategies being used to develop writing skills raise standards for all groups of pupils across the school.
- Strengthen the ways in which parents' views of the school are sought and used in school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and most pupils leave the school with well above average attainment. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes so that standards are slightly above their expected levels by the start of Year 1. The majority of children develop good skills in literacy and numeracy.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress. Standards are above average with nine out of ten pupils gaining at least a Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. However, a greater number of higher level grades are gained in reading and mathematics than in writing. The school has been successful in improving the standards of mathematics in Key Stage 1.

From Year 3 to 6, all groups of pupils make good progress so that standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are well above average. The effective system of tracking pupil progress has supported their good progress but it shows that pupils do not do quite as well in writing as they do in other subjects. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures that they make good progress. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), an issue in the last inspection, have improved because computers are now used well in many lessons. Pupils make good progress in music and physical education, where standards are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well and there are clear systems for dealing with incidents of misbehaviour. Most pupils enjoy school and one parent wrote, 'My son will leave with only positive and happy memories'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have time for reflection in assemblies. They develop a very good understanding of the wide range of cultures both within their own community and in the wider world. Attendance is above average and effective systems are in place to monitor absences. Problems of punctuality noted in the last inspection have been largely resolved. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both through eating sensibly and taking exercise. They have a very good understanding of what it means to be part of a community. Older pupils willingly take on responsibility, for instance, as play leaders and helping younger pupils around the school. All classes are involved in raising funds for charities. The school council is fully involved in improving the school environment and playground facilities. Pupils are very well prepared for their future lives through the development of basic skills and the excellent opportunities they have to work together.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good with some outstanding features, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Inside and outside the nursery and reception classrooms, rich learning opportunities are provided, both adult-led and child-initiated. Children learn well and develop positive attitudes to learning from the outset. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, lessons also motivate pupils because teachers use a good range of methods to interest them, including the use of interactive whiteboards. Behaviour is managed well and, as a result, pupils concentrate on their learning. The whole school focus on using assessment more effectively is supporting the drive for better achievement. Teachers are placing more emphasis on identifying and sharing learning targets with pupils. They ensure that pupils understand what it is they need to learn to reach the next level. A pupil remarked, 'You can learn properly because the work isn't too hard or too easy'. In a minority of cases marking is not always used consistently or constructively to make certain that pupils

know what they have to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that has some outstanding features. Pupils show enthusiasm for their lessons, are well motivated and so they achieve well. The school's work to promote personal development is particularly effective. Strong emphasis is placed on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school offers an outstanding selection of additional learning opportunities including the opportunity for all pupils to learn at least two musical instruments. Visiting places such as Celtic Harmony camp and St Albans Abbey enhances pupils' learning by offering them real life experiences. Pupils talk animatedly about learning during themed weeks such as 'The Pirates' and 'Pet Week'. They also recall the excitement of the residential trip to the Isle of Wight. Extra opportunities such as these mean pupils are inspired further and want to learn more.

The breadth of extra-curricular provision supports pupils well and adds considerable enjoyment to their school experience. The outdoor learning environment provides a rich addition to pupils' learning with particularly good use of the school's jubilee garden. The school has, rightly, identified giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing whilst learning in other subjects as a means of raising standards further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. One parent wrote that the school provides 'an excellent environment to allow the children to develop into confident, caring, conscientious and hardworking individuals'. The school carries out appropriate checks on adults who work with children and risk assessments on activities both inside and outside school. Pupils feel safe and know that there is someone they can turn to if they have a problem. The school has good systems in place to track pupils' academic progress and indicate to teachers the next stages for pupils to take in their learning.

Termly reviews of progress help teachers and the good number of teaching assistants to give extra support where it is beneficial. This has contributed to the improved achievement seen this year. Pupils of all levels of ability know their targets. Good support is given to all pupils, including the gifted and talented, to achieve and even surpass their targets. There are good arrangements to prepare pupils for their secondary schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher successfully encourages and enables all staff to work together so that the school improves. Parents, teachers and governors have a shared approach to promoting good standards of behaviour, enjoyment in learning, and high levels of care and attainment for all pupils. The deputy headteacher and the newly formed leadership team are providing a strong impetus for improvement across the school. Revised systems of monitoring are having a positive impact on standards of teaching and pupils' progress.

The school is effective in identifying key areas for development and is accurate in its own self-evaluation.

Staff are fully involved in discussing strategies for improvement and the school's action plan is a good working document with clear success criteria and monitoring arrangements. Subject leaders are developing their roles so that they are now taking a greater part in the planning and monitoring process. Lesson observations are well developed but there are insufficient opportunities for peer observations and sharing of good practice. The school is effective in recruiting staff and there is a good programme of professional development. The school runs very smoothly and calmly on a day-to-day basis.

Governors are well informed about the school's progress and areas for development. They are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. They monitor progress well and are individually linked to specific subject areas. The budget is managed well and the school provides good value for money. The school has successfully addressed all the issues identified in the last inspection.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	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	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?	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

11 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Bengo Primary School, Bengo, Hertford, SG14 3DX

We want to thank all of you for the way you made us feel welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you all and seeing you working and playing together. It was good to hear you sing so well in the assemblies.

These are some of the things that your school does well:

- you try hard and make good progress in your work
- you feel safe and happy at school
- you behave well and are keen to learn
- you treat each other well and look after the younger pupils
- you understand about the importance of being healthy
- the teachers and staff care greatly for you
- teaching is very good and lessons are interesting
- there are many visits, theme days and after-school activities
- the school is tidy and the classrooms are attractive.

These are the things we have asked Mrs Hallahan, the staff and governors to do to make your school even better:

- give you more opportunities to practise and develop your writing so that you reach high standards in this subject
- make sure that parents and carers are involved in improving the school.

Keep working hard and enjoying the many things you do at Bengo Primary School. We would like to wish you success in your future education.

With very best wishes

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector