



Bean Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118266
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291069
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Patricia Davies

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Community		Bean
Age range of pupils	4–11		Dartford DA2 8AW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01474 833225
Number on roll (school)	175	Fax number	01474 834427
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Stephen Bonner
		Headteacher	Yvonne Hunter
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bean Primary is a smaller than average village school situated in an area with some challenging social and economic circumstances. The large majority of pupils are from White British families. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, including a very small minority who are Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. About half the teaching staff has changed over the last two years. The school is currently led by an advisory headteacher during the recruitment of a new permanent headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bean Primary is a satisfactory school with a strong sense of community. It has much success in ensuring that pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Provision in the Reception class is good and standards are largely as expected by the end of the school year. Reception children quickly gain confident social skills, independent learning habits and an enjoyment of learning. These qualities form an invaluable start to pupils' education. The result is to be seen in pupils' ready participation during lessons and in their good behaviour. Pupils of all ages happily take on responsibilities, whether they are small everyday tasks or the greater commitments of the school council. Pastoral support is thorough and the strongest element of the school's satisfactory care, guidance and support. Pupils' enjoy the wide variety of clubs, visits and visitors that add richness to the school's satisfactory curriculum. The considerable attention given to personal, social and health education ensures pupils' good understanding of how to be fit and healthy. A substantial range of strategies has been introduced to improve attendance, but these are too recent to have made major inroads on improving attendance, which is below average. Standards have recovered from the fall in test results in 2005 and are broadly average by Year 6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some examples of good progress during lessons. Nevertheless, there is not yet enough consistently good teaching and learning to lift pupils' achievement beyond its present satisfactory level. Improvements to assessment have been significant and enable the school to keep careful track of pupils' progress and set challenging targets for the standards pupils are expected to reach. The careful analysis of academic information gives the school a clear understanding of where its priorities lie. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Working in close partnership, the advisory and deputy headteachers are managing the school well. They are driving ahead with improvements and keeping a vigilant watch on the school's performance. The programme of robust monitoring has not yet been fully extended to include all key members of staff. As a result, some subject leaders do not yet have a full grasp of the impact of initiatives within their areas of responsibility. Governors are looking at ways in which they can monitor the school more successfully in order to be in a stronger position to ask critical questions to help the school improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Secure consistently good teaching and learning in order to lift pupils' achievement above its present satisfactory level.
- Implement rigorous monitoring by all key members of staff and the governing body so that they can evaluate the impact of initiatives.
- Ensure good levels of attendance from all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory for all groups of pupils and standards are broadly average. Good progress during their first year at school means that receptionaged children reach expected standards when they enter Year 1. Thereafter, progress is satisfactory, maintaining broadly average standards at Years 2 and 6. A fall in Year 6 test results in the 2005 was uncharacteristic and caused largely by disruption to staffing, most particularly during this group's final year. Test results for 2006 and current standards show a return to the average attainment of earlier years. Reading standards are strongest and the school's greatest levels of attention have, therefore, been focused on improving writing and mathematics. Careful structuring of writing activities, interesting texts and good attention to grammar and subject vocabulary are proving to be successful. Similarly, progress during lessons is good when pupils are encouraged to think through and explain their strategies for solving mathematical problems. Science was not tackled to the same degree and test results at Year 6 fell further in 2006. Nevertheless, more opportunities in recent months for investigating scientific ideas have helped raise standards to average levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' considerate, sensible behaviour and their great enthusiasm are conspicuous features of good personal development. The confident personal and social skills nurtured in the Reception class are reflected throughout the school in pupils' ready cooperation with classmates and their good relationships with adults. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed. They happily share ideas and listen to the views of others; in Year 6, for example, they thoughtfully explored sophisticated issues to do with commercial advertising. Pupils are quick to take responsibility and support others at playtimes. Through their school council, pupils play a valuable part in influencing important aspects of school life, such as reviewing the code of conduct. All these personal qualities create a strong sense of community. Through the acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives. Pupils know what to do to keep safe if they have any worries while they are at school, in the confident knowledge that difficulties are resolved promptly. Although many pupils come to school regularly, attendance is below average. The school has introduced a good range of robust strategies to promote and celebrate good attendance and works closely with the local authority (LA) officer. Because some of these initiatives are recent, they have not yet had a chance to improve attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils are keen to learn. They make the most of opportunities to share and refine ideas with others during quick-fire chats with a partner and settle quickly to work. Interesting topics that fire their imagination and interest add much to their enthusiasm and help to ensure ready attention. Careful and detailed planning gives lessons a firm structure. Discussion with the whole class valuably prepares pupils for their subsequent tasks but, too often, answers are accepted from a small number of pupils, rather than seeking information and ideas from a wider group. Assessment information is used well to identify those in need of additional support. Increasing knowledge of the attainment of individual pupils means that activities are mostly pitched appropriately to individual needs and abilities. Nevertheless, different ability groups are not always challenged as much as they could be, particularly in mathematics. It is inconsistencies of this kind that prevent pupils from always achieving as well as they could. Expectations of presentation and handwriting also vary; they are good in most classes, but in others untidy work is not routinely and effectively tackled.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for English, mathematics and science benefits from a number of improvements, for example in practical science and problem solving in mathematics. These developments are gradually increasing the rate of progress. Information and communication technology (ICT) has been an area of intensive activity. Improvements to resources have successfully laid the foundations for increasing further the ICT skills of pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy a varied range of activities in addition to the basic curriculum. These are as diverse as workshops with an artist from the Traveller community, technology projects with a local secondary school and visits from an African dance group. Other highlights include a wide choice of popular clubs and sporting activities and a strong emphasis on healthy eating. These initiatives provide valuable experiences in preparation for adult life and affirm the value the school places on all members of the school and wider community. Special projects, such as the work of Years 3 and 4 with the Royal Opera House, allow for links to be drawn across subjects. The school sees this as a valuable way forward for enhancing its everyday curriculum, but this integrated approach is not yet a fully-fledged feature of planning. Consequently, too little use is made of other subjects to improve writing skills, for example.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Members of staff know individual pupils well and this knowledge forms the bedrock of the school's committed pastoral care. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and

assessing risk are thorough. There are good links with outside agencies to support, for example, those learning English as a new language, children in the care of the LA and those from the Traveller community. Support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly effective in promoting social skills and good behaviour. In order to get as much information as possible to support children entering the Reception class, the school is extending its contact with the many pre-school establishments. Progress is carefully monitored so that staff can assess where pupils need extra support. Pupils know their learning targets for English and mathematics and refer to the comments staff make about their work. However, the quality of guidance given to pupils on how to reach their targets varies. In some classes, marking and feedback do not clearly indicate to pupils what they should do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have moved swiftly to ensure that improvements continue to thrive. Targets for the standards pupils are expected to attain are challenging and staff are working hard to increase pupils' rate of progress so that these targets are met. The capacity for future improvement is satisfactory. For example, improvements to assessment have extended the accountability for academic performance to all class teachers. Lesson observations show that robust monitoring and feedback is improving teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the school is aware that it still has more to do to increase the proportion of teaching that is good. Analysis of data clearly identifies the school's educational priorities. So, too, does consultation with pupils, parents and carers about other aspects of the school's work, such as healthy eating. Parents value the school's pastoral strengths. As one parent wrote, 'The staff are friendly and approachable and my children enjoy going to school and are keen to learn in the school environment.' Having demonstrated a rigorous programme of evaluation, senior leaders are ensuring that other key managers start to take on the same role. The governing body is well aware of its responsibilities and for the need to extend current monitoring procedures so that it can increase the quality of its influence and support.

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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	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	3
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?	3
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 very much for being so welcoming and friendly when we visited your school. You were very helpful when we spoke to you about all your activities. We found that your school is doing a satisfactory job and that all the staff are working hard to make it even better. Those of you in the Reception class are doing well. Here are some other important things about your school:
- You are all enthusiastic about what you learn and you are happy to share your ideas with others and listen to what they have to say.
- You behave well and are happy to take on responsibilities and help others.
- You make at least satisfactory progress and there are times when you progress well during lessons, especially when you have the chance to explore and explain your own ways of working out mathematical problems.
- You enjoy all the clubs and exciting activities the school gives you to do, like the opera workshops and sporting opportunities.
- The school takes good care of you and you know how to keep safe and healthy. Here are some things your school has been asked to do to make things even better.
- Make sure that you are taught well in all your lessons so that you always learn as much as you possibly can.
- Ensure that all the teachers check carefully that the improvements they make are successful.
- Make sure that you all come to school regularly and you can all help the staff to do this by coming to school every day during term time.