



Bobbing Village School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118333
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291096
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Kevin Hodge

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sheppey Way
School category	Community		Bobbing
Age range of pupils	4–11		Sittingbourne ME9 8PL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01795 423939
Number on roll (school)	211	Fax number	01795 423939
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dennis Batson
		Headteacher	Karen Ware
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school which has grown in numbers rapidly in recent years owing to new housing developments. New accommodation has been added to the school since the last inspection in response to the rise. Over the past few years, very high numbers of pupils joined the school in the older age groups. A significant proportion of these had learning difficulties and disabilities. Currently, around a quarter of the school roll has learning difficulties. This is above average. Pupils start school with levels of attainment that are typical for their age. There are few pupils from ethnic minority groups. The headteacher and governing body are currently supporting the management of another school nearby.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bobbing Village Primary is a good school that has improved a lot in recent times. Staff work skilfully to support all pupils, but particularly newcomers to the school, by providing varied and interesting activities that both challenge and motivate them. As a result, all pupils achieve well. Children have a secure start to school. The good Foundation Stage provision is exciting and stimulating. All pupils reach their early learning goals and some exceed them. Building on this good start, pupils in Years 1 and 2 now reach above the expected levels. These higher standards are now working their way up through the school. In Years 3 to 6, standards have been depressed in recent times because of a large influx of pupils joining the school who exhibit learning difficulties. Nonetheless, the good achievement now established ensures that the majority reach average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. There are some weaknesses, however, in pupils' investigative and problem solving abilities in mathematics.

Strong provision for pupils' care, support and guidance ensures their personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. As a result, pupils' behaviour is excellent and they show positive attitudes to others. Pupils really like the way staff take the time to get to know them. Many echoed the view of one pupil who said, 'I really like the way the teachers respect you as a person so your background doesn't matter'. Staff are good at ensuring school is a fun place that motivates pupils to learn well. A good curriculum with a number of additional activities, such as modern foreign languages and after school clubs, helps to extend their desire to learn. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not used enough to extend or record their work in other subjects.

Pupils' good achievement, and particularly that of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, is as a result of good teaching and provision throughout the school. In the Reception class, pupils' personal development is promoted extremely well and all teachers plan interesting lessons that capitalise upon the pupils' natural enthusiasm. Specialised small group and extra support has helped to improve pupils' writing and calculation skills. Although teachers gauge pupils' progress well, their marking in Years 3 to 6 is often too brief or overly generous to help pupils know how to improve their work. The good leadership and management shown by senior staff set clear yardsticks about how to treat pupils. For example, the high levels of care shown by all staff typically provoke comments from pupils such as 'I feel safe' or 'I've only been here for three weeks and I feel really happy'. This aids pupils' achievement effectively. Good links with outside agencies support vulnerable pupils very well. The governors provide good support and have helped influence marked improvements. They ensure pupils are taught in a safe, modern environment which enables pupils to learn quickly and enjoy school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by increasing their investigative and problem solving abilities.

- Ensure the marking of work in Years 3 to 6 gives pupils more precise and consistent guidance about how to improve their work.
- Plan more frequent opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in different subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The green shoots of improving standards are very evident in this school. Since the last inspection, standards have improved, particularly in pupils' writing where they now reach the levels expected. In recent times, the school has successfully established above average standards in pupils' work in Years 1 and 2. These improving standards and good achievement are now working their way up through the school. The high numbers of pupils joining the school in Years 3 to 6, usually with weaker basic skills, caused recent test results to decline. A strong focus on literacy has improved pupils' achievement and their enjoyment of writing. Pupils came close to meeting their challenging targets this year. However, some weaknesses remain in pupils' investigative skills in mathematics. Children in the Reception Year gain confidence quickly and make good progress. Pupils' current achievement is good and is promoting higher standards in all age groups. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with fellow classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Reception Year children make excellent progress in this area so that within a short time they are confident and settled. As they move through the school, pupils' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development helps them have very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. They enjoy their work and their attendance is good. Pupils say they feel safe, do not feel bullying is an issue and treat each other with respect and kindness. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and many try to make sensible choices for their packed lunches and school dinners. Pupils enthusiastically take part in games activities and many attend the additional sports and dance clubs. The school council value its part in influencing issues such as improvements to playtime activities and in developing a 'quiet area'. Although older pupils act as mentors for others, the range of responsibilities they have is limited. Pupils gain a good awareness of how they can contribute to the world beyond school by working together to support activities in the local community. They gain good basic skills that prepare them well for life as responsible and successful citizens in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lively and exciting activities capitalise on the children's natural enthusiasm and foster their social skills particularly well when they start school in the Reception class. Interesting practical activities in English and mathematics help pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn particularly well. Throughout the school, teachers develop very good relationships with and between pupils which promote good learning. Lessons are interesting because activities are pitched at the right level so pupils feel both motivated and challenged. The high number of pupils joining these classes during the past three years has been handled skilfully. Intensive small group activities in number work and writing enable most newcomers, particularly the high proportion of them who have learning difficulties and disabilities, to catch up to expected levels. Opportunities to extend pupils' investigative and problem solving skills in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 are not exploited sufficiently. Teaching assistants support both class and small group activities skilfully; this contributes well to pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good range of activities which helps pupils to learn well in most areas of their work. Reception class activities are very well organised, interesting and promote children's great enjoyment of their early days at school. This gives a good basis for their move into Years 1 and 2, where good levels of practical activities in basic skills help them learn quickly. Linking activities between different subjects in Years 1 to 6 is increasingly making learning more relevant and interesting in subjects such as art and history. Opportunities are missed for pupils to use their ICT skills regularly or develop investigative skills in mathematics. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have well devised activities to enliven their learning and they achieve well as a result. A good range of well attended after-school clubs and the inclusion of French teaching in the curriculum adds to pupils' enjoyment of school life. Links with other schools broaden pupils' horizons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's great emphasis on developing pupils' personal and emotional skills results in a well ordered, safe and very caring community. Very good relationships between all enable pupils to feel they can ask for help and advice when needed. The counselling support available to parents and pupils significantly helps pupils make good progress. Links with outside supporting agencies, which help target support quickly to where it is needed most, are well developed. Pupils speak appreciatively about the high level of help they receive after changing schools, for example. Pupils have clear, long-term targets for improving their achievement which are regularly reviewed with parents. In

Years 3 to 6, marking is inconsistent and does not provide pupils with enough guidance on how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior staff manage and lead very effectively and make the best use of staff expertise. The school has worked hard to give new pupils good support by carefully analysing their abilities to target specific help where needed. Subject leaders review activities carefully to ensure basic skills are taught well and senior staff monitor teaching closely to see what still needs improving. The school's self-evaluation carried out by senior staff is largely accurate and covers a wide range of activities and reviews. The analysis of emerging test results has given a good steer for improvement in areas such as pupils' writing and mathematics for the higher attaining pupils. Recent changes to the number of after school clubs have been made quickly in response to parental opinion. One parent reflected the view of many, 'I recommend the school to everyone. A "gold star" to all involved.' Governors are engaged with and very supportive of the school and have helped influence the significant improvements to the accommodation. Their monitoring of how effectively improvement priorities are progressing is limited which reduces their ability to ask searching questions to help further improvement. On important fronts, such as enhancing classroom facilities, resources and pupils' writing, progress since the last inspection has been good. The school is well placed to improve further.

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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?	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	3
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	1
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?	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.

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

Thank you for making our visit to your school so enjoyable. We liked looking around and meeting you.

- We think that you all work hard to make Bobbing Village Primary a good school.
- You make good progress with your work and standards are rising throughout the school.
- You behave extremely well and feel safe because the school cares for you well.
- The children in the Reception class settle in well and quickly feel confident.
- Your parents or carers agree with us that the school still feels like a small school which you told us you like.
- The school provides good activities for you and good teaching makes your lessons fun and helps you to learn well.
- The headteacher, governors and staff run the school well and do a good job in making Bobbing a friendly place where you learn lots of interesting things.
- The range of extra activities is good, especially the sporting activities you do.

We have asked the school to look at these things to improve:

- We believe you should have more opportunities to investigate and solve interesting problems in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- When teachers are marking, we want them to give you more ideas about how to improve your work.
- We want you to use your good information and communication technology (ICT) skills in lots of subjects, not just in ICT lessons.