

Bowbridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132784
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	294023
Inspection date	10 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Trenttini
Headteacher	Mr D Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Bailey Road Newark Nottinghamshire NG24 4EP
Telephone number	01636 680 142
Fax number	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Bowbridge is a much larger than average size school serving an area of Newark which indicators suggests has exceptionally high levels of economic and social deprivation. The number of pupils known to be entitled to claim free school meals is very much higher than in most schools. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and hardly any whose first language is known to be other than English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or a disability is considerably higher than in most schools though the number with a statement of special educational need is lower. The school has an Investor in People Award, a Silver Eco-Schools Award, Gold Healthy Schools Status, a Silver Arts Mark and a Quality in Study Support Award.

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 providing good value for money. While it has some areas for development it also has outstanding features. The school's success since the last inspection is due in no small part to the strong vision of the headteacher and the determination of the hardworking staff to work together to, 'Promote the value of Life Long Learning for the children, parents and staff of the school community'.

Most children start school with exceptionally low standards in all areas of their learning. They settle very quickly into the happy and stimulating environment of the Foundation Unit and make good progress. While standards are still well below average when they enter Year 1, pupils have begun to develop vital skills to help them get ready to learn. They continue to achieve well and make good progress throughout Years 1 to 6. This good achievement is not reflected in the results of tests and assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 which show that standards in English, mathematics and science are below those of most pupils nationally. These results do not demonstrate the school's success, particularly in overcoming the pupils' considerable barriers to learning, the extremely high number of pupils who arrive throughout the year and the high proportion who have a learning difficulty or a disability. These pupils are supported by teachers and teaching assistants to do well.

Good teaching, based on positive relationships and a greatly enriched curriculum, helps to ensure that pupils are happy, interested and make good progress. Pupils leave visitors in no doubt about how much they really do enjoy being at school. Most staff have a good knowledge of their pupils and how well they are progressing. However, occasionally, planning for lessons does not always result in an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able. Teachers work hard to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills but not enough emphasis is placed on developing their problem solving skills. The curriculum is good with an emerging outstanding element. Bowbridge is one of the leading schools in the country to develop Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). As a consequence of this effective programme for teaching pupils how to look after themselves, their family, friends, school, community and the planet, pupils' own contribution to their community is now outstanding. The school agrees that further work is required to develop and formalise the curriculum to ensure the teaching of basic skills is more integrated and that there is a progression of skills across all subjects and phases of the school.

Good care and support are provided for pupils. Pastoral care is a strength of the school because everyone in the school really does go the extra mile to make sure each child feels valued, secure, confident and increasingly ready to learn. Consequently, pupils make remarkable progress in their personal development which, by the time they leave the school, is good.

Leadership and management is good, with outstanding leadership of ESD. Everyone is clear about how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to continue to improve. Past successes, along with a determination to do even better and the potential that the imminent new building provides, demonstrates that there is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Construct an integrated curriculum framework which ensures progression in skills across all subjects and phases of the school, including problem solving skills.

- Improve pupil progress by ensuring that planning always results in appropriate challenge, particularly for the most able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children enter the Foundation Unit with exceptionally low levels of achievement in all areas. They make good progress but have so much catching up to do that standards are still well below those expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children continue to progress well in Years 1 and 2. Assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards are well below average. Various factors disguise the true picture. These include the very high numbers of pupils who enter and leave the school other than at the end of year, the extremely high number who are constrained by a learning difficulty or a disability and the extraordinary amount of work the school has to do to simply to get pupils ready to learn well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. Importantly, evidence shows that the amount of progress pupils make from Years 3 to 6 has quickened over recent years and at the time of the inspection, pupils were seen to be making at least good and often better progress in Years 3 to 6. This is again despite the many constraints on test results. Those who remain in the school over time make particularly good progress. The very high numbers of children with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including social, moral spiritual and cultural development are good, representing remarkable progress. The behaviour of most pupils is good and of some it is exemplary. Because of the efforts made by teachers to deliver an exciting curriculum, enjoyment is extremely high and attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils make an outstanding contribution within and beyond their immediate community in terms of trying to live in a sustainable way, such as through recycling, using resources sensibly and even purchasing ethically. The school has an Eco-club and its principles have been adopted by all in school. An emphasis on healthy eating and physical activity has helped pupils to develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy. Pupils are delighted to tuck in to the healthy breakfasts, snacks and lunches now provided by the innovative kitchen staff. They are taught successfully about how to keep safe. The school's work to improve attendance has been a success and this is now satisfactory. Good personal skills and improving basic skills prepare pupils satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good and enthusiastic teaching results in pupils developing positive attitudes to learning. Teachers make lessons interesting, ensuring good behaviour, very positive relationships and, importantly, that pupils gain increasing self-confidence and self-belief. Pupils enjoy their lessons and talk with enthusiasm about their work. Learning is often lively with activities that are tailored to appeal to pupils' different learning styles. Teachers' emphasis on improving speaking and listening skills is beginning to pay off. Though pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas, there is not yet enough emphasis on developing their thinking and problem solving

skills. Marking is up to date and celebrates success. It does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Teachers plan conscientiously. Occasionally, this does not result in sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able. The school has a good number of skilled teaching assistants who work closely with class teachers and outside agencies to ensure those who need extra help, either individually or in groups do well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is successful because it provides for the specific needs and interests of the pupils at Bowbridge, making it unique and a reason why they enjoy school so much. Central to the curriculum is the emphasis on ESD. Some of this work is outstanding and extremely popular with pupils. For example, older pupils run 'Planet Radio' enabling them to broadcast their message across school, to parents and the community beyond. Several volunteered that this experience has changed their lives, broadened their views and helped them to discover talents they would otherwise not have known. Other activities involve the whole school, either through themed weeks, a range of visits and visitors or by exploring the local community and environment. Good quality opportunities are offered to pupils to develop their music, drama and dance skills and older pupils learn French. A good number of extra activities, including after-school clubs and trips appeal to a range of interests, ensure horizons are broadened and lasting memories are made. The school agrees that work is required to develop and formalise the framework for a more integrated curriculum which incorporates basic skills and ensures the progression of skills across all subjects and phases of the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. This is because of the high level of commitment of senior leaders and all staff who know just how much work there is to be done to support the pupils at Bowbridge and their families in order that barriers to learning are reduced and readiness to learn can be developed. As a result pupils progress remarkably well in their personal development. Pupils report that they feel valued and safe. Some spoke of the mutual trust and respect between themselves and adults. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are firmly in place; arrangements for child protection are rigorous and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Pupils arriving at different times in the year settle quickly because of the excellent systems in place to make their entry to the school a very positive experience. The school's monitoring systems quickly identify where pupils are finding learning more difficult and enable staff to put measures in place to help them improve, often working effectively in partnerships with other agencies. The system of target setting for individuals is currently being fine tuned to ensure that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's highly effective leadership, with strong support from the deputy headteacher, other senior managers, staff and governors, has ensured that the school has continued to improve. This has been despite the challenges of

amalgamating two schools, significant staff changes, working within the confines of inadequate accommodation and managing an extensive new building programme. The vision and ethos are very clear and are central to the school's success. Leaders have created a strong community and are committed to inclusion, effective partnerships, ESD and extended services as a way to successfully drive forward school improvement. Leaders know the school well. The headteacher is rightly determined to share leadership. New leaders have been in place for only a short time but their impact is beginning to be felt; for example, in science and information and communication technology.

Leaders are particularly successful in gaining funding for initiatives which add considerably to the personal development and care of pupils and their families. The governing body provides a good degree of challenge and supports the school well.

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Annex A

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	4
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	3

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

Inspection of Bowbridge Primary School, Newark, Nottinghamshire. NG24 4EP

I was pleased to meet you and all the staff and very much enjoyed the time I spent with you. I particularly enjoyed hearing you sing so joyfully and hearing your professional radio broadcast as I walked around the school. Thank you for making me feel so welcome, talking to me, and helping me to find out so much about you and your school.

You go to a good school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, teachers and all the other grown-ups at Bowbridge Primary School do their very best for you. They look after you and care for you very well. Your teachers make learning interesting and enjoyable and they work hard to help you make good progress in lessons. Your good behaviour in class, around school and in the playground really helps you to learn well. It is clear that you are really happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there. Your work to look after the environment is a really good example to everyone.

The school is very keen to find ways to help you do as well as you possibly can. Though you already make good progress, I think you could do even better. I have asked your teachers to help you improve your skills in solving problems. I have asked that they also make sure that you always have work to do which challenges you, especially those of you who find your work a little easier. I have asked those who lead the school to make sure that they have a way of checking that the activities that you do and the skills that you learn progress carefully right through your time at the school.

I am sure that Mr Dixon and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to work hard, behaving well and by coming to school every day.

I would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead Inspector