

# Bridgewater Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122076
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	302140
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Geoff M Adams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 June 1998
<b>School address</b>	Bridgewater Drive Northampton NN3 3AF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 637056
<b>Fax number</b>	01604 450169

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school opened four years ago with a Reception Year only. Numbers have gradually increased with each new intake and the school will eventually have the full primary age range. The school is scheduled to move into new purpose-built premises in September 2007, having spent its first years in a former middle school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, but the proportion with complex needs is increasing. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. An increasing minority of pupils join the school speaking little English. Almost a quarter of pupils attend an out-of-school club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

As a relatively new school, Bridgewater has established itself well. Dedicated leadership by the headteacher, consistently good teaching and a commitment to pupils' welfare are the key factors in the school's good quality of education and care for its pupils. The vast majority of parents are very happy with all aspects of the school's work, shown in the high rate of return of the inspection questionnaires and summed up by one parent, 'The staff have worked hard to gain a good reputation and the school can only go from strength to strength.' A few parents indicated that their views are not taken into account enough but inspectors found no evidence that this has affected pupils' academic progress and personal development. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of good pastoral care and academic guidance. Staff have high expectations for behaviour and this leads to calm pupils who are naturally sensible and understand the need for safety, for example, when moving about the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and dealt with well when reported to an adult.

Children settle quickly in the Foundation Stage and the good provision at this stage enables them to get off to a good start and to learn to love school. Older pupils are highly motivated by the diverse teaching approaches and want to be challenged by learning. As one pupil said and others agreed, 'School work is fun, times a billion.' The curriculum is good and pupils find their tasks interesting. This helps them to achieve well and reach above average standards, as in the Year 2 national assessments. Standards are not as high in writing as in reading. The school recognises this and has plans in place to extend pupils' writing skills. Pupils find their learning targets help them to understand what to concentrate on next in their work but teachers' marking does not always give enough written guidance on precisely what they have to do to improve further.

Leadership and management are good and a sense of teamwork pervades the school, mirroring the model provided by senior staff. Performance data have been used well in giving the school an accurate picture of how well it is doing and to set its improvement agenda. This means that the school has good capacity to improve further as the school expands and moves into new premises. Changes made this year to the teaching of reading and mathematics have already resulted in higher standards in these areas

### What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the plans to improve the teaching of writing.
- Ensure that marking gives pupils clear written information about how to improve their next piece of work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children come from a number of pre-school settings and have a broad range of attainment, but overall it is similar to that expected for their age. The good provision in the Foundation Stage means that children develop well and join Year 1 achieving the goals set for their development. They have very positive attitudes to school and an enthusiasm for new learning. Although they make good progress, a significant minority have lower levels in the early stages of writing and calculating than in other areas of their development. Throughout the rest of the school pupils continue to make good progress and they exceed the challenging targets set for them. In 2006, standards were significantly above the national average at the end of Year 2

and the 2007 results show further improvement. Writing has not improved as much as reading and mathematics, but pupils' good achievement and grasp of basic skills prepare them well for their future education. The school has already changed the teaching of handwriting and plans are in place to include more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school develops its pupils well, and they respond with increasing maturity and participation in a learning journey with their teachers. Pupils are happy and enjoy school, typified by a pupil stating, 'When I get out of bed I am excited by coming to school.' Children in the Foundation Stage respond well to the staff's high expectations for behaviour and learning and they transfer from home to school without undue problems. They enthusiastically have a go at the many activities available to them. The behaviour of older pupils is never a barrier to their learning and they are consistently well mannered and polite, and enjoy engaging adults in lively conversations. Pupils work and play well together. Bullying is rarely a significant issue. Attendance is above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities as part of the school and wider community. All pupils are included well and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds proudly celebrate and share their cultural backgrounds with their peers. Pupils take responsibility through the school council and play an active part in school life, being involved, for example, in staff appointments and school developments, such as designing anti-bullying posters placed around the school. Pupils talk knowledgeably about healthy lifestyles in relation to both diet and physical activity. Lunchtimes are active sessions with many pupils involved in playing games such as football together or being coached in sports clubs.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is typified by a wide range of approaches, making learning active and interesting for pupils. Pupils understand how they learn which helps them to develop independence and to take initiative for themselves. For example, work is often based on problem solving and pupils are encouraged to decide whether to work alone or in small groups and where they learn best in the classroom. Teachers organise this well so that the environment is calm and pupils work hard because they are absorbed in their learning, often effectively supported by teaching assistants. Teachers help pupils to understand the progress they make in a number of ways, such as checking against their 'steps for learning'. Work is marked frequently and praises achievement well, but does not give enough advice about how work could be improved.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum makes a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Teachers have worked closely with the local authority to amend national guidance so that the curriculum is interesting and relevant to pupils' needs. The tasks set are appropriate to the different ages and capabilities of pupils, although the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage is not always used as effectively as it might. Teachers already make some links between subjects and the school has plans to

extend this approach further as it develops new topics. Year teams evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum regularly and make changes where this is necessary, for example, the planned changes to the writing curriculum. The basic curriculum is enriched well by many visitors to the school, visits to places of interest, themed weeks and the introduction of French in Year 3. Most pupils take part in extra-curricular activities which provide very good opportunities for pupils of this age through sports coaching, information and communication technology and music.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are good. The school uses appropriate support from outside agencies when this is necessary. Parents strongly approve of the school's diligence and realise that it contributes greatly to pupils' enjoyment and progress. Parents appreciate the opportunities provided by the out-of-school club and pupils enjoy the varied activities before and after school. Children are secure and protected well whilst at school. All statutory safeguarding arrangements are in place. Health and safety procedures are thorough and teachers are vigilant about some of the natural danger areas connected with the current site.

Good quality support and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enable them to make good progress. Satisfactory support enables pupils learning to speak English to join in with all classroom activities and acquire the necessary language skills. The school recognises that this aspect of its work requires further development as the proportion of pupils not speaking English increases. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly and the information used effectively to provide support for those who are falling behind their expected levels.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has used his experience and skills very effectively in piloting the school through a twin-track strategy to improve the present school in the short term, whilst planning a move into new buildings in the longer term. His clear and well communicated vision for the school's ethos and standards has resulted in a strong sense of involvement and teamwork across the school. He is successfully recruiting to meet the needs of the current and future school. For example, the new deputy headteacher has quickly improved provision for pupils with additional needs. Subject leaders have driven their subjects forward and are improving standards, particularly in the core subjects. Teachers share good practice well through classroom observations, but feedback is not sufficiently rigorous in detailing areas for improvement.

The school development plan is an effective management tool and progress towards the strategic targets is monitored well by the leadership team. Governors are supportive of the school and many have a strong commitment. However, they are not universally confident in monitoring the curriculum and standards, and to date, have not received sufficient training in these aspects. Consequently, governors do not yet have the essential skills to be critical friends of the school. Some school policies are not fully up to date.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

13 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridgewater Primary School, Northampton, NN3 3AF

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and I am now writing to you to let you know what we found out.

We agree with you that Bridgewater gives you a good education.

- You make good progress so that older pupils reach higher standards than other pupils of their age.
- You work hard in lessons and understand how you learn best.
- You say that you find lessons fun and we also enjoyed being in lessons with you.
- Teachers give you an interesting and exciting range of subjects, clubs and visits.
- Children settle well into school life in the Foundation Stage.
- You know a great deal about how to stay healthy and you are very active at playtimes, playing football together or learning how to play tennis.
- Adults take good care of you.
- You say that there is very little bullying and that you can always speak to an adult who will help to sort out problems if you are worried.
- The headteacher and the staff think very carefully about how well the school is doing and do something quickly if they think something needs improving.

We have asked your teachers to improve two things to help you to make your work even better and we recognise that they already have plans in place for these.

- They will be helping you to make your handwriting better and will be giving you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in the other topics you study.
- They will be writing down more about what you have to do to make your work better when they mark your work.

We know that you will take their advice and continue to work hard to make your school and your parents proud of you.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead inspector