

Belvedere Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101438
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307685
Inspection date	9 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Margaret O'Neill
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Mulley
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Mitchell Close Belvedere DA17 6AA
Telephone number	020 8311 9092
Fax number	020 8311 9666

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Achievement and standards
- Teaching and learning
- Leadership and management
- Personal development and well-being

Evidence was gathered from performance data, observation of teaching and learning, school information and records, and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires, and discussion with pupils, staff and the Chair of Governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Belvedere is a large infant school. 52 children attend the Nursery part time. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than found nationally. The largest groups are from Black or Black British African backgrounds and Asian or Asian British Indian backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than that found nationally as is the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities. These relate mainly to moderate learning, speech, language and communication and behavioural, emotional and social needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Belvedere Infants is a satisfactory school. Although not inspected in detail, it is clear that its strongest features are good care, guidance and support and, as a result of this, pupils' good personal development and well-being. Most parents praise the school for helping their children to enjoy their early education. The school's friendly and positive ethos and good relationships between staff and pupils, contribute much to pupils' good behaviour and their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. One child said, 'It's interesting to listen to people who do different things and believe in different things and we can all learn from each other'.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 standards are average in writing and very close to average in reading and mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory and recent improvements are helping pupils to make more rapid progress. However this is not yet consistent across the classes. More remains to be done by leaders to keep improvements moving forwards at a good pace and build on pupils' success. The school knows how well individual pupils are doing but procedures to keep a check on pupils' progress and achievement have not been helpful to teachers or leaders in keeping track of the attainment of different groups of pupils. The headteacher identified this weakness and a new system has just been introduced.

Standards in writing are better than those in reading, mathematics or science because of additional support and many opportunities for pupils to write independently. The initiatives that senior school leaders have established to raise standards in reading, mathematics and science are working well and beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. There is now a consistent approach to teaching pupils to link sounds and letters from the Nursery through to Year 2 and teaching assistants are providing good support to guide small groups in their reading to help their comprehension. Mathematics remains a weaker area and so teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills. A heightened focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is beginning to have a positive impact on their learning in all subjects, including scientific enquiry, although sometimes teachers miss opportunities for developing these. Teaching assistants provide good support and work well with individuals or small groups. As a result, pupils with a range of learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to others and their work is well matched to their needs.

The headteacher has made sure that there are good policies and procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Parents feel that their children are well cared for. One parent wrote, 'I believe the school has the best interests of the child as the basis for its decision making.' Attendance is well below average. The majority of pupils attend school regularly, but the persistent absence of pupils from a small number of families brings down the overall attendance figures. The school works hard to promote better attendance and works well with other agencies to support the children and their families. Discussions with pupils show that most enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully, enjoy answering questions and like to use computers and interactive whiteboards. They are very enthusiastic about participating in the wide range of clubs and extra activities available. Children in the Reception classes were bubbling with enthusiasm about their visit, on the day before the inspection, where they had seen lots of animals. Pupils are proud of being a Healthy School and were confident in describing foods that help them stay fit and healthy. They say they feel very safe at school and are confident to talk to any adults if they have any problems. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and is proud of its work to make the school and the local community

a safer place for all the pupils. The level of pupils' basic skills means they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

A small number of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt they lacked information about changes and developments in the school. The school and the inspector acknowledged that clearer information on the reasons for any changes would help to strengthen the partnership.

Subject leaders have a good knowledge of the curriculum areas they are leading and have made plans to improve them further. Some are relatively new to their posts and though it is too early to accurately assess their impact on school improvement, a satisfactory start has been made. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have successfully strengthened the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teams. As a result there are consistent approaches to learning within the stages. The school is now working to ensure continuity of teaching, learning and the curriculum as pupils move from Reception to Years 1 and 2. The school is supported by a good governing body, which understands the challenges the school faces. The school has made improvements since the last inspection, though more remains to be done to improve attendance and sharpen school improvement planning so that there is a greater focus on standards. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Since the previous inspection a new Nursery has been built. Children say how much they like it. It is spacious, attractive and well resourced and enables staff to successfully provide a wide range of activities. As a result of the new building, much more space is available for children in Reception. When children start in the Nursery or Reception classes, their skills are lower than expected for their ages and many are at the beginning stages of learning English. As they move through the Foundation Stage they steadily gain basic skills and do best in developing their personal, social and communication skills. Nonetheless, when they leave the Foundation Stage standards remain lower than expected, although children achieve satisfactorily given their starting points. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff achieve an appropriate balance, in all the areas of learning, between adult led activities and those where children can make their own choices. Skilled leadership and management have successfully developed a unified Foundation Stage and as a result, children are beginning to make progress at a faster pace. The outdoor area is an impressive space which is well equipped to provide good learning opportunities but it is not used regularly enough as an extension of the classrooms.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in reading, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the developments in tracking pupils' progress are helpful to teachers in pinpointing pupils' next steps in learning and that information is used to rigorously evaluate the progress of different groups to raise standards.
- Pursue further ways to improve attendance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

20 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Belvedere Infant School, Belvedere, DA17 6AA

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed my visit to your school and what I found out. Thank you for making me welcome, for talking to me about your work and telling me what you think about your school.

I found out that your school is satisfactory. There are also some good things about your school.

- You enjoy your lessons and get on well with each other and all of the staff.
- Your behaviour is good.
- Everyone in the school looks after you really well.
- You know lots about how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.
- You listen well when your teachers are talking.
- You enjoy using the computers and the interactive whiteboards in your lessons.

These are things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do to help improve your school.

- Help you to do better in your reading, mathematics and science.
- Keep a close check on how different groups are learning.
- Improve attendance. You must help by coming to school every day and being ontime, otherwise you will miss important learning.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly, polite and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector