

# Balgowan Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101587
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	307746
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Whatson

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	647
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Tricia Spedding
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Andrew Swatland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Balgowan Road Beckenham BR3 4HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8658 6374
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8663 0251

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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:

- The impact that leadership and management have had on the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- The strengths of pupils' personal development and well-being.
- Whether all pupils are given the necessary support and guidance for them to achieve well.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This school is much larger than most other primary schools. It is popular and over subscribed. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Many ethnic groups are represented in the school, but the vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A lower than average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. A new leadership team, including the headteacher, started in September 2007. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Active Mark, and is currently working towards the Artsmark, the Healthy Schools Award, and the ICT mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'We have always been extremely happy with the education and standards at Balgowan', commented one parent, echoing the views of many. The inspection found that their views are well founded. It is a good school.

By the end of Year 6, standards are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science and have been for the last five years. The progress that pupils make between Year 3 and 6 is exceptional. Pupils are prepared well for their future. Standards in Year 2 in 2007, although slightly higher than the national average, have been slowly declining for the last three years. Although all pupils in Key Stage 1 were making satisfactory progress, some, including those with learning difficulties and higher attaining pupils, were not making the progress of which they are capable. This is a similar issue to that found at the previous inspection.

In September 2007, the new leadership team made a very quick and accurate evaluation of the school and identified that standards in Key Stage 1 were too low. They also assessed that not enough use was being made of data about pupils' performance.

The headteacher and his team took quick and effective action. They made raising standards in Key Stage 1 a priority. They wrote a detailed and comprehensive strategy to raise standards that started with the rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching. In Key Stage 2, this identified that pupils make rapid progress because of good teaching. It is often outstanding for the older pupils. However, in Key Stage 1 teachers did not always meet the needs of different groups of pupils in their class. Teachers have received focused support, training and detailed feedback on their performance. This, coupled with the recent introduction of new planning formats in English and mathematics, is helping teachers plan more accurately to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities and to offer greater challenge. As a result, teaching in Years 1 and 2 is now good and pupils are making better progress. Standards, however, remain only slightly above average because of slower progress in the past.

The school's thorough self-evaluation identified that the level of support in Key Stage 2 is both plentiful and focused. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. However, in Key Stage 1 focused support had been more limited and, as a result, so has the progress of these pupils. The school has employed additional teaching assistants, and increased the support and interventions available in Years 1 and 2. This is helping pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language to make greater progress.

Parents are pleased with the school's new leaders. Reflecting many parents' views one commented that 'The school is on the way up' as 'He (the headteacher) has brought a great vision and confidence to the school'. There are good relationships with parents and, although many commented that that the school does not communicate well with them, a few stated that this is beginning to improve.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is very good. 'If we did not have school it would be boring'. This is how one girl summarised her view of the school and her friends agreed. These comments are reflections of the rich and diverse curriculum. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs. Those that feature music and sports, such as the recently introduced early morning 'Sportz' sessions, are particularly popular among pupils of all ages. School lunches are good and have healthy options. Pupils are fully aware of what they should do to stay healthy. Specialist music teachers and visiting artists enable pupils to develop their talents even further and produce some remarkable art work. In lessons, pupils are able to link subjects together to make

their learning more meaningful. For example, pupils used a variety of skills in designing and making their puppets.

Procedures to promote pupils welfare are secure. Pupils feel safe and have a good knowledge of how to stay safe, for example on the Internet. Relationships are good and pupils say that there are adults that they would go to if they had a problem. Pupils closely follow the school's maxim of 'Be Kind, Work Hard, Make Friends'. Assembly themes, such as that on justice, reflect the school's strong focus on supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils' needs are carefully analysed and support given to help those who are socially or emotionally vulnerable. School rules, high expectations and an agreed behaviour policy and procedures ensure that the school is calm and orderly. Pupils and parents say that behaviour is good, that bullying is minimal and that any unruly behaviour is dealt with fairly. In lessons, pupils' keenness and attentiveness support their good progress. There is an effective school council. It has initiated improvements in games played at lunchtime breaks. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility the school gives them to be 'Fit Fun' leaders and to help younger pupils. Pupils raise money for local charities and have a strong presence in sports events and musical performances, such as the prestigious Bromley Prom. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils know their own English and mathematics targets reasonably well. They state that teachers marking and comments are particularly helpful. Following the recommendations of the last report, there is now a good system for tracking pupils' performance and identifying underachievement. This is used well by the school's leaders but class teachers do not use it well enough to support and guide pupils' academic development.

The headteacher is committed to staff development. The careful coaching of subject leaders is helping them to take on greater responsibility for their subjects. Team work is good and all staff are very committed to making Balgowan an outstanding school in the next couple of years. The governing body is increasingly effective. Governors are becoming progressively more knowledgeable about the school's performance. They are working closely with the new leadership team to raise standards. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory, but given the recent impact of the new leadership team, its capacity for further improvement is very good.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter Reception with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, most exceed the expected goals for their age. Consistently good teaching, a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and careful assessments contribute to the good progress the children make. Children learn to co-operate with one another and develop very positive attitudes to their learning. The good leadership of the Foundation Stage has had a positive impact, for example, on teaching phonics (helping children to link sounds and letters). Children learn their letter sounds through a wide variety of fun and challenging activities, that includes puppets and model yaks (to teach the 'y' sound). As one parent said, 'There has been a dramatic improvement in the teaching of reading in Reception since the new phonics system has been introduced'. There are plans to improve the outdoor provision as it does not allow children to move freely from the indoors to the outdoors and extend their learning. The thoughtfully planned and delivered induction system is considered by many parents to be a great strength.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure that teachers use data about pupils' progress more rigorously in order to challenge and support all their pupils more effectively.

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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
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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	1
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	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

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Balgowan Primary School, Beckenham, BR3 4HJ

Thank you for contributing to the inspection of your school. I enjoyed being in your lessons and talking to you about your work and your experiences. I agree with you and your parents that Balgowan is a good school.

You describe your work enthusiastically and show that you enjoy school. Your attendance is very good. I also found that, by the end of Year 6, your work is of a very high standard and you make excellent progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 are not quite so high. I think they should be better and so does your new headteacher. He and all the other adults have been working hard to help you learn faster and they are beginning to have some success.

Your behaviour is good and you show care and respect for each other. You have good relationships with each other. You are well looked after and feel safe and secure. You concentrate and work hard and this helps you achieve so well. You enjoy opportunities to take responsibility. There is a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. You particularly enjoy the musical activities and the new morning 'Sportz' sessions. You have good knowledge of how to stay healthy.

You said that when teachers mark your work you find it very helpful. The school tracks your progress very well. The school's new leaders have used this very well to help them find out how good the school is and provide some of you with extra help. You can all learn faster, especially in Key Stage 1. I have asked your teachers to use this data more thoroughly so that they can meet all your needs and give some of your harder work.

I hope you continue to follow your school motto of, 'Be Kind, Work Hard, Make Friends'.

Yours sincerely

David Whatson

Lead inspector