

Beaudesert Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109466
Local Authority	BEDFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	309994
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Verrier
Teacher in charge	Mrs Mary Philips
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2005
School address	Appenine Way Leighton Buzzard Bedfordshire LU7 3DX
Telephone number	01525373019
Fax number	01525373019

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized lower school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than in most schools, although there is considerable variation in different year groups, such that the proportion is above average in some. Fewer pupils than nationally have English as an additional language. Standards on entry to the Reception year are broadly in line with those expected for children's ages. However, overall early reading, writing and numeracy skills are weaker than some other areas of learning. The school has Healthy Schools, Active mark and Intermediate and full International Global Learning awards. Although there has been stability in the teaching staff for the last few years, there have been significant and ongoing changes to the leadership. At the time of the inspection, the school had an acting headteacher, who was in post for one term and also an acting assistant head, who was covering for a maternity leave.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for all its pupils and, as a result, they make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Standards by the end of Year 4 are above those expected for pupils' ages. Although they are average in writing, they are well above the expected standards in reading and slightly above in mathematics. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff work together effectively to make lessons interesting. The curriculum is broad and enriched by a very good range of extra activities, including excellent links with other schools internationally. As a result, boys and girls from all groups, including those with learning difficulties, are interested in lessons, enjoy their work and concentrate fully on what they are taught. However, pupils do not receive sufficient opportunities to write in a range of styles for various purposes, including factual writing, nor do they use computers often enough to research and present information.

Assessment is regular and detailed information is kept. However, the format makes it difficult to analyse the progress of different groups quickly. Senior leaders plan to sharpen teachers' assessment skills further and to review the way information about how pupils are progressing is analysed. This is to create more efficiency in providing information for spotting trends. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. In some respects, co-ordinators are taking responsibility for active monitoring of their subjects. The school has identified the development of managers' roles in monitoring and tracking standards as an area for further development. The acting headteacher has a good knowledge of the school and is providing a steady and warm leadership. She and other leaders are well aware of the school's main strengths. Areas for improvement have been accurately identified and are already in the school improvement plan. The school's evaluation matches that of the inspection in nearly all respects. However, care and welfare, which inspectors found satisfactory, were evaluated by senior staff and governors as excellent. This difference has occurred because some of the school's good policies are not always translated into daily practice. Opportunities for pupils to take initiative and develop independence are satisfactory. The school has identified the need for older pupils, in particular, to become more involved in the evaluation of their work, but this is not yet happening in all classes.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are courteous and well behaved. Attendance has improved and is good. Pupils are developing good ideas about keeping healthy and safe. They learn to develop positive relationships and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class where the curriculum is good and the co-ordinator and governors have plans to extend the outdoor environment to promote children's learning even more effectively. Teachers and support staff plan together effectively to support children and give them a good and happy start to their school lives. They make good gains in their learning and achieve well. By the time they start in Year 1, standards are often above the goals expected for their ages. Standards in writing and numeracy broadly match these goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review the management and implementation of tracking and monitoring procedures so that leaders at all levels are better placed to make informed decisions.
- Improve the breadth and regularity of pupils' writing experiences, so their written skills improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children settle well into the Reception class and make good gains in their learning, owing to good quality provision. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of their time in Key Stage 1, standards are slightly above average and pupils' achievement is good. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is currently good. Pupils make good gains in their learning, and achieve above average standards particularly in reading and also in mathematics, which has recently been focused for improvement throughout the school. Pupils from all groups achieve well and attain the challenging targets that are set. In writing, progress and achievement are satisfactory and pupils attain the standards expected for their ages. Writing has now been identified as an area for development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning underpin their good personal development and well-being. They try hard and take pride in their achievements. They enjoy school strongly and their good attendance is improving. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and excellent links with schools in other countries promote cultural understanding strongly. Pupils grow in self-awareness, think in moral terms and reflect upon their feelings and actions. Behaviour is good and pupils are courteous and polite. However, lack of opportunity limits occasions when pupils could take the initiative in making decisions for themselves about what to do and learn next.

Pupils work and play together well. They share ideas, listen to one another and celebrate each other's achievements. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, which has helped to win the school a national award. They develop a good understanding of personal safety and, as a result, work and play safely and look after one another very well. In a wide variety of ways, from fund-raising for local and international charities to helping things run smoothly, pupils make a very full contribution to the life of their school. They are building good foundations for later life and learning the skills they need for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning are based on the good relationships that teachers forge with their pupils, who respond with relaxed and happy learning. Pupils engage fully in their set tasks. Teachers make good use of a range of resources, such as interactive whiteboards, to make lessons interesting and exciting. As a result, pupils enjoy their work. Teachers and other adults work together effectively. Support staff are well informed and make a good contribution to the progress pupils make.

Targets for the next steps in learning are set, based on assessment and in some classes these are shared with pupils. However, this involvement is not undertaken consistently throughout the school. While assessment takes place regularly, senior staff have identified first the need to sharpen teachers' skills in assessing the levels pupils are working at and, secondly, to introduce a simpler system for collating and using the information gained more efficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged through a very good range of activities. Themed events, such as International Week, clearly benefit pupils' knowledge and understanding. They talk enthusiastically about these and other activities.

Provision for personal, social and health education is good and has a strong impact on pupils' personal development. The school modifies its curriculum effectively so that those with learning difficulties or disabilities progress at a similar rate to all others. Visitors and visits extend and enliven the curriculum. A very good range of popular extra curricular provision includes sports and gardening.

Strong emphasis is given to developing basic skills but there is potential for more use to be made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support writing skills. The organisation of setting for literacy and mathematics in the older two year groups is not consistent between classes, as one teacher teaches only literacy and another mathematics, while a third teaches both subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school meets all current requirements for safeguarding its pupils. All required policies are in place but the procedures in them are not yet consistently followed, partly because of changes to leadership.

Pastoral support is good. Pupils know what to do if they feel bullied and are confident any issues will be resolved. Pupils settle quickly into school because of the good support and encouragement they receive and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' individual needs are identified quickly and the school strives to meet the needs of every pupil. Relationships with parents are generally good. Parents' responses to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive in their opinions of the school. However, more could be done to engage parents and carers, particularly of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, in their children's education.

The school has recognised that procedures for monitoring academic progress are not as efficient as they could be and that there is a need to track pupils' progress more effectively. Furthermore, many pupils do not sufficiently know what they need to do to improve and, while marking at its most effective helps pupils move on in their work, this is not the case in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school is going through a period of significant change in its leadership. Governors give good support and take their responsibilities

seriously. The acting headteacher together with governors has a good overall knowledge of standards throughout the school. Routines and daily systems are well established and the school runs smoothly, providing good value for money. Information from tracking and assessment is kept carefully. This results in largely accurate school self-evaluation. Leaders and managers have identified the major areas for improvement and these have already been built into the development plan. For example, it plans to improve the use of information from assessment more rigorously to drive up standards further. Co-ordinators are hardworking and enthusiastic. However, they have not, as yet, fully developed their leadership roles.

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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
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	2
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?	3

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	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

8 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Beaudesert Lower School, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 3DX

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly to us when we visited your school recently. Mr Greatrex and I enjoyed talking to you and seeing all the lovely things you do.

The really good things about your school are:

- you are well behaved, enjoy school and attend regularly
- you make good progress, especially in reading
- your teachers teach you well and make lessons interesting
- you all learn extremely well about being healthy and staying safe
- you have excellent opportunities to learn about schools in other countries
- there is a really good range of clubs and other things to make the curriculum interesting.

The things we have asked your teachers to do next are:

- to find and use easier ways of keeping information about how well you are all getting on
- to give you more opportunities to write things for yourselves.

We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you work.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes

Lead inspector