

# Bearwood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109836
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	310117
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paula Protherough

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Barlow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Bearwood Road Sindlesham Wokingham RG41 5BB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9784628
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bearwood is a smaller than average sized primary school near the outskirts of Reading. There are similar proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds to other schools nationally and these are predominantly from Asian and Traveller or Romany backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. The few children with special educational needs includes pupils with emotional and behaviour disorders and autism. The school was recently awarded the Enquiry mark and has Healthy Schools Status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Bearwood is a satisfactory and improving school. In recent years standards have been below the national average. The school has halted this decline and is closing the gap. This is because the headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Under her good leadership the school has successfully addressed the issues from the previous inspection. The staff team have clearly defined areas of responsibility and are beginning to develop secure management skills. The school's assessment information and the inspectors' analysis of work in books show that all pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Current levels of attainment show that the proportion of Year 6 pupils working at the expected levels has increased to levels similar to last year's national average.

The headteacher and senior leaders, supported by the Local Authority have successfully identified the priorities for continued improvement. An intensive training programme to improve teaching has benefited the school. As a result, teachers now plan to a common framework and marking is more consistent. Recently introduced systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are improving the capacity of the headteacher and staff to know more exactly the progress made by individual pupils. However, not all teachers make enough use of this information to ensure that pupils are consistently challenged in their work. This is particularly the case for higher ability pupils, who have insufficient opportunities for independent working and writing at greater length. Similarly, whilst some teachers are beginning to involve pupils in setting themselves learning targets, others are less advanced.

Parents rightly recognise that a key strength of the school lies in the successful way that it nurtures the pupils. As one put it, her child has 'blossomed'. Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is excellent. Relationships are positive and the caring, calm and, peaceful ethos, promote the pupils' good personal development. The social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme has had a major impact in raising pupils' awareness of their own feelings and relationships, and successfully improving behaviour and attitudes.

The introduction of a creative curriculum where subjects are linked and taught thematically motivates and engages pupils so they are interested and work hard in lessons. This is particularly helpful in raising the achievement of boys.

The school works hard to develop productive links with its diverse communities and strives to promote positive relationships between them. They are successful in this within the school. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn about cultures beyond their immediate locality and their knowledge of other customs or religions is narrow.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Most children arrive at Bearwood with little or no previous experience of education beyond the home. The Foundation Stage team successfully focus on the development of good personal and social skills so the atmosphere is harmonious, busy and happy. As a result, the youngest children settle quickly, become familiar with the everyday routines and work happily alongside the older Reception pupils.

The staff team have a thorough assessment programme. This helps the adults quickly identify the next steps in children's learning and match experiences to their learning needs. Their thorough assessment of the children shows that the levels of knowledge and skills that the

children bring with them on entry to the Nursery varies widely, but overall, is lower than expected of three-year-olds. By the time they leave Reception the proportion of children working within the goals expected of five-year-olds is average.

The children make good progress because of the effective way that adults make learning real and interesting. For example, as part of an 'under the sea' topic, children are fascinated by the opportunity to look at real fish and talk about how they eat, swim and breathe. Similarly, in songs, games, class, group and play activities, children effectively develop early mathematical skills such as counting and matching. Recent developments such as the structured teaching of letters and sounds are developing their confidence in early reading and writing. Children are getting off to a good start and acquiring a thirst for learning.

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

- Ensure that tasks in lessons offer the right level of challenge for all pupils and, especially the more able.
- Extend target setting so that individual pupils know their next steps in learning.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to learn about the breadth of cultures and customs in 21st century Britain and beyond.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In 2007 assessments show that standards improved by the end of Year 2 and were slightly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 attaining the expected levels is lower. However, the inspectors' analysis of their work shows that they have all made steady progress over the past year and are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their starting points.

For several years standards in the national tests for eleven-year-olds have been below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, there was improvement in English and mathematics and standards were broadly average. There has been a continued successful focus on raising attainment in all core subjects. This year the teachers' assessments, confirmed by the inspectors' analysis of pupils' work, shows that Year 6 pupils have made satisfactory progress in relation to their results as seven-year-olds in all three core subjects. Further evidence of accelerating progress is apparent in the current Year 5 with almost half of the pupils already achieving the levels expected at Year 6.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils appreciate the family atmosphere of the school and the many opportunities to promote their personal development. The school works hard to promote good attendance but current levels are only average. Although the vast majority of pupils attend well a tiny minority does not, despite the best efforts of the school. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils show a high level of cooperation and sociability. They understand how to be safe and have confidence in the adults in school to support them if they have a problem. Playtimes are peaceful, 'Bearwood Buddies' ensure that no one is left alone and peer mediators sort out the rare playground

disputes. Pupils know how to live healthy lifestyles and make sensible choices about food. They take full advantage of the many opportunities the school offers for physical activity in lessons and clubs because they enjoy physical education lessons and sport. The school council helps pupils to learn to consult and take on responsibilities such as managing their own budget. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall but their knowledge of world faiths and cultures is underdeveloped. They make a good contribution to the wider community, for example, through maypole dancing and carol singing in the neighbourhood and through charitable fund raising.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory. Positive relationships are a significant feature of the school that underpin successful learning. Adults and pupils treat each other with mutual respect so that pupils are confident in contributing their ideas and working collaboratively.

Recent developments in relation to the school's approaches to planning have improved several aspects of teaching. This can be seen in the structure of lessons, which now offer a good range of activities such as whole class, group, 'carpet buddies' and individual work. The staff also make effective use of interactive whiteboards to support learning in many lessons. Teachers are always careful to make clear what it is that pupils are expected to learn. However, these objectives are sometimes too broad. This means that work is not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities, especially the more able.

Marking has improved and teachers provide satisfactory feedback to pupils about how to improve their work. Year 6 pupils benefit from their work on activities such as the 'Quest Project,' which emphasises self-initiated learning. However, there are currently too few of these types of opportunities. This limits the scope for more able pupils to produce the high quality work of which they are capable.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's curriculum provides a good range of interesting and enjoyable activities. It is built around imaginatively designed themes linked to a good variety of first hand experiences such as visits, visitors and special activities such as a Wokingham diary or Hatch Farm studies. This successfully engages and motivates pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well in lessons. The curriculum for English and mathematics is developing well and teachers are making better, planned links between subjects so that pupils can use these basic skills in other subject areas. This is contributing to the rising standards. For example, Year 1 pupils wrote poems for literacy, which were illustrated, and word-processed in an ICT lesson. The teachers provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well supported and appreciated by the pupils. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and the new curriculum means that pupils are confidently developing and using their skills from Foundation Stage to Year 6. The school provides a good programme to support pupils' personal development, citizenship and social skills.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school successfully promotes the health, safety and well-being of its pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding are secure. As a result, exceptionally good relationships between staff and pupils create a climate that raises confidence and self-esteem. Adults provide sensitive and well-focused support for vulnerable pupils, including those with autism and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a well-judged combination of withdrawal and in-class support provided by the learning support assistants. Effective links with a wide range of support agencies, including neighbouring schools, enrich learning opportunities and support the transfer of pupils from Year 6 to secondary school.

Pupils' academic guidance has improved but is not yet fully effective. Assessment information is used to track progress and set challenging targets for groups of pupils. However, the setting of individual pupil targets is not yet consistent across the school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has good oversight of the school and with the support of the Local Authority is building leadership capacity across the school. The staff team is getting to grips with their management responsibilities. Together they have accurately evaluated how the school can improve and set out an action plan linked to a comprehensive monitoring programme to develop teaching and learning. The impact of this can be seen in improved teaching and the start of an upturn in the school's performance. The pupils' positive attitudes and excellent behaviour, improved results and accelerating progress are examples of the school's good capacity to improve.

The school governors have a satisfactory oversight of the work of the school. A few have benefited from the training provide by the Local Authority. As a result they are able to offer support and increasingly, critical challenge, to hold the staff fully accountable for the school's performance.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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>	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	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

15 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bearwood Primary School, Wokingham, RG41 5BB

As you may remember, we visited your school recently to see how well you are getting on. You were a great help to us because you chatted to us in lessons and around the school and gave us a lot of information. You told us that you enjoy school because of the interesting activities and clubs the school provides for you. We found that your teachers and teaching assistants are working very hard to make the school a better place and help you learn faster. They have changed the way they teach and have planned a more exciting curriculum. As a result, your work is getting better and you are making better progress with your writing, reading, mathematics and science.

We think that your behaviour in lessons around school and playtimes is excellent because you listen and work hard in lessons and are kind and considerate to each other. The adults help you to behave well because they look after you very well. One of you told us: 'Bearwood is not a big school, but we are a family' and we agree with you.

We have asked your teachers to improve some areas because we think that your work could be even better. They are:

- match the tasks you are given in lessons to what you already know so that you are always challenged and have to work hard
- talk to you and help you set targets, so you know what you have to do to improve your work
- teach you more about other religions and cultures so that you have a better understanding about other people who have different beliefs and lifestyles to you.

Carry on enjoying school and good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paula Protherough

Lead Inspector