

Bishops Waltham Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115863
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312080
Inspection date	30 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barry Phillips
Headteacher	Miss Christina Sabine
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Oak Road Bishops Waltham Southampton SO32 1EP
Telephone number	01489 892375
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Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and what the school is doing to help more pupils reach the higher levels in writing. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff and pupils also contributed to the judgements. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves a suburban community on the outskirts of Southampton. On starting school, children's skills and understanding are broadly typical of the age group. The great majority of pupils are White British, with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The pupils who need extra support have speech and communication problems or specific learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bishops Waltham is a good school. Pupils achieve well because of consistently good teaching, through which they develop a love of learning. Standards have risen steadily over the last few years and are now above average. A good number of pupils attain the higher levels in reading and mathematics, but fewer manage this in writing. The school is tackling this by building in plenty of opportunities for using their writing skills in other subjects. Daily phonics (letter and sounds work) lessons mean pupils are getting better at reading unfamiliar words and they are gaining more confidence in writing independently. These strategies are now evident across the school but have not been in place long enough to ensure all pupils reach their potential in writing by the end of Year 2.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, particularly noting how much their children enjoy school. Typical comments from the parental questionnaires are, 'very friendly and approachable staff', 'children receive a well-rounded education' and 'a safe and nurturing environment where my son's self-confidence has blossomed and his enjoyment of school is very evident'.

Lessons excite pupils as teachers provide imaginative activities that fully engage them. Consequently, pupils develop excellent attitudes to learning and are very keen to participate. Teaching has improved as a result of careful observations of lessons, and effective coaching provided where help was required. Now, most lessons are good or better, as teachers have a very clear grasp of what they want pupils to learn, and make use of every opportunity to encourage pupils to extend their learning. All classrooms include stimulating activities and a 'hands-on' approach is adopted across the school. For example, role-play areas adjacent to every classroom promote pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. Pupils confidently choose resources independently from the 'shelf boxes' and use the areas set aside for independent work sensibly without being under constant supervision. The school rightly believes that pupils could be further involved in making decisions about their own learning and this is a priority in the development plan.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They treat one another with respect, and behave impeccably both in class and around the school. Pupils are courteous and sensitive to the needs of others. They are keen to take on responsibilities, such as acting as register or lunchtime monitors, and they make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. They develop a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles in science and physical education lessons and through the playtime 'huff and puff' scheme. Pupils know how to stay safe and look after themselves. They take turns in representing their classmates at the weekly school council meetings. This contributes to their moral development and helps pupils to understand their responsibilities towards the wider community. Pupils are well prepared for their next school and future lives because they develop good literacy, numeracy and computer skills, and learn how to work cooperatively and independently.

The excellent curriculum, which involves many visits and visitors, promotes spiritual and cultural development very well. Experiences such as watching chickens hatch encourage pupils to reflect on the wonder of nature. The impact of a recent visit to Winchester Cathedral is clear in the pupils' accounts of their feelings as they entered the huge building and looked closely at the many works of art. Paintings are used effectively to provide a context for writing. After studying

'Beach Scene' by Degas, one pupil wrote, 'She looked at the boats, but there was something strange! There were more than when she looked earlier'.

The outstanding level of care and support pupils receive is underpinned by the excellent relationships between adults and children. Pupils always have someone to turn to because 'adults know us well'. Staff are quick to spot anxieties and rigorously follow up any concerns they have, drawing on outside expertise when necessary. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are first class. Pupils are very well supervised during playtimes and they take full advantage of the wide range of activities available. Pupils say there is no bullying and are confident that any incidences would be followed up. They receive excellent academic guidance. Prompts for improving writing are displayed in every classroom and pupils are well aware of what they need to do to improve. This was evident as pupils enthusiastically sang and did the actions to 'the VCOP (vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation) song' they had made up to the tune of 'YMCA'. Teacher's marking identifies the strengths in pupils' work and provides precise guidance about the next steps. Pupils who have learning difficulties or communication problems receive strong support and make good progress due to the close partnership between teachers and teaching assistants.

Leadership and management are good. The school monitors and evaluates its performance effectively and uses the findings well to make necessary improvements. Governors maintain an overview of the school and achieve this by challenging, questioning and first-hand experience in school. Since the last inspection, assessment procedures have been enhanced and teaching has improved. The school's track record of improving standards demonstrates that it has good capacity to improve further. The success of the school owes much to the excellent leadership of the headteacher who inspires staff and pupils and has the confidence of parents and governors. As she is soon to retire, governors have started the process of succession planning. They recognise the importance of extending the leadership roles of other staff to ensure the school's overall effectiveness is maintained.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Outstanding provision in the Reception classes enables children to progress very well and most reach or exceed the expected standards. The provision is extremely well managed. Comprehensive planning ensures a very good balance of teacher-led activities and those chosen by the children. The teaching is lively and underpinned by warm relationships. Children delight in using the wealth of indoor and outdoor resources. These provide excellent opportunities for social development and speaking and listening. Children were totally absorbed, for example, as they enjoyed being both customers and staff in the 'Café' set up outside. Phonics are taught systematically and children enjoy the challenge of learning the sounds letters make. For example, the most able children made viable attempts at writing the name of an animal for every letter of the alphabet. Children's secure knowledge of using numbers for counting gives them confidence to tackle early addition and subtraction, and they acquire good computer skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the school's strategies to help more pupils attain the higher levels in writing are used consistently.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishops Waltham Infant School, Southampton, SO32 1EP

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit. I was really impressed by your behaviour in lessons and around the school, and by how well you get on with one another. It was good to see how much you enjoy lessons and I could see why. The displays in classrooms and around the school illustrate the wide variety of exciting things you do. During my visits to your classrooms, I would have liked to have tried many of the activities myself! Outside too, I saw how you were learning lots from playing with the large plastic blocks and all the other apparatus, such as the fitness zone and the pirate ship.

You told me that Bishops Waltham is a good school and I agree with you. Children get off to a flying start in the Reception classes and, because all teachers make learning such fun, everyone is keen to do well. I was pleased to see that you all have targets which tell you what you need to do to improve. Because the teaching is good and you work so hard, you progress well and reach above average standards. Some of you find it difficult to improve your written work but the teachers are working hard to support you. I have suggested that they continue to use things like the 'punctuation pyramid' and 'VCOP', as you told me that these are very helpful.

Adults look after you very well but I was pleased to find that you have a good idea of how to stay safe and avoid problems when an adult is not present. Your keenness for physical activities shows that you know the importance of exercise and I was interested to see how much you know about healthy eating. It was good to see that you help out in school and make suggestions during the weekly school council meetings. The school makes sure you are well prepared for the future by making sure you have good literacy, numeracy and computer skills and by helping you work alongside one another sensibly.

I am sure that you know that all the good things you enjoy at school are due to how well the school is run. Everyone has your best interests at heart. You can do your bit by continuing to work hard and supporting one another.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector