

Belle Vue Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116234
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312225
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Corke
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Painter
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Belle Vue Road Aldershot GU12 4RZ
Telephone number	01252 323494
Fax number	01252 315212

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Belle Vue is an average size Infant School. In March 2006, the school federated with the neighbouring Newport Junior School. A shared governing body was established and the headteacher of both schools took up appointment in September 2006. The school serves one of the top five most deprived wards in Rushmoor - classified as an area of high social need. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around 47% - significantly higher than the national average. The majority of pupils are White British with only 5% of children who speak English as an additional language. There has been a falling roll in recent years. Years 1 and 2 have fallen to 2 form entry. There has been a considerable turn over of teaching staff, with four new teachers starting this September (just over two weeks ago). Belle Vue renewed the Basic Skills Award in March 2007 and is currently seeking validation for the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Belle Vue currently provides a satisfactory level of education for its pupils, but it is rapidly improving. Very good leadership and management by the headteacher since she joined the school a year ago, is enabling all involved to move the school, and the federation, forward rapidly. As one parent observed, 'As parents of a pupil in Year 2, we have seen an improvement since the school appointed Mrs Painter as head. The children have a sense of belonging as they are involved more.' The federation provides a warm, supportive environment where the care for each pupil ensures the good development of their personal qualities.

Pupils join the school with a range of skills but, taken overall, their attainment is below average. Children in the Foundation Stage are now getting off to a good start because the staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and take meticulous care to make sure all children are able to settle in quickly and smoothly. Provision in Key Stage 1 is now satisfactory overall. Many of the systems for assessment and monitoring are new but they have already begun to be effective in the day-to-day running of this key stage. The staff, teachers and teaching assistants, plan and work together, often with their colleagues in the Junior school, and have a zeal to improve that is infectious.

After two years of declining results in national tests, 2007 has seen a rise in standards at the end of Key Stage 1. The targets set for 2008 are challenging, but in the light of the improving quality of teaching observed, they are appropriate. One of the main reasons for this improvement is the more consistent expectations of pupils' work and behaviour from the whole staff across the federation. As they acknowledge there is still a way to go to make the curriculum as exciting and relevant as it needs to be, particularly in order to raise the achievement of boys.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show caring attitudes to each other and the environment. They learn to respect children from different backgrounds and develop a good understanding of healthy living and keeping safe. Most parents recognise this, one reflecting the views of many in noting, 'It is a school with a sense of purpose.'

Pupils appreciate their teachers' efforts to make lessons interesting. However, although much of the teaching is now good or better, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching overall. Throughout the school, lessons are well planned and teachers aim to make learning fun. The expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the pace of lessons, are good in most classes, but there are variations across the school, where some teaching is not as brisk as it should be.

The very effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Staff have a shared vision of continued improvement and they are working tirelessly to identify and tackle the many areas identified, both in this school and across the federation, for development. They have successfully improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is beginning to increase accordingly. Given their current track record, they are well placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is now good provision in the Foundation Stage, where the new set of teachers plan enjoyable and challenging activities for the children. This careful planning gives the children a real sense of determining their own way forward and guarantees their full involvement in all activities. Children thoroughly enjoy all their days in school and this provides them with a good

start to their education. The resources, particularly in the shared areas, are stimulating and effective. All staff have already got to know the children very well. They make a careful note of all responses and feedback. The information collected about pupils is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable pupils settle well. This is achieved by providing very good support from the very experienced teaching assistants wherever it is needed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching to improve achievement levels.
- Improve the curricular provision so that it is more inclusive of boys' needs and provides a greater range of stimulating activities to engage all pupils.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Recognising that standards by Year 2 had to be raised, the school has worked determinedly to improve pupils' basic skills and confidence. This is leading to significant advances in pupils' progress. Standards in 2007 were broadly average, but there was considerable difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Overall girls achieved well and showed significant improvement over the previous year. This was less so for the boys. The challenging targets set for next year show the school's determination to improve. The good tracking systems now in place show these targets are realistic. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress, due to the specific interventions to support their social development and the very effective encouragement they receive from the support assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development makes a significant contribution to their all-round development. Pupils enjoy all that the school offers. From their earliest days in Reception, relationships are positive and, across the school, good moral and social development means that pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils of different backgrounds play and work together very well. Attendance is now in line with the national average and improving. Pupils make a sound contribution to their school and the wider community, for example, through the effective school council and acting as playground friends at the 'Bus Stop'. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Their sound progress in basic skills, and good personal development, means that they are well prepared for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many of the teachers are new to the school and the teaching seen during the inspection was mainly good and occasionally outstanding. However, teaching over time has led to satisfactory progress, and there are still inconsistencies to address. Relationships are good and consequently pupils are motivated to learn and enjoy their work.

Teachers now plan and organise lessons well and give pupils clear guidance on their work. As a result, in most lessons, but not all, pupils work hard and concentrate well. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and through effective questioning pupils have opportunities to discuss their work and extend their thinking. Teaching assistants contribute very well to pupils' learning especially through their support of small groups of pupils. Teachers regularly mark pupils work, but do not always tell them what to do to improve or ensure improvement takes place, which limits its usefulness.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Sound planning ensures continuity in pupils' learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school has begun to use a topic approach to planning to help make the curriculum more interesting but this does not yet take enough account of boys' interests to ensure their full engagement. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all areas of learning and is well matched to children's needs. Good routines enable children to settle into school well. The 'Music and Rhyme' sessions they attended before starting school were a great help and were much appreciated by parents. The Personal, Social and Health education programme promotes pupils' personal development well. There is a good range after school clubs and pupils particularly enjoy cooking and outdoor games. School visits, such as the imminent one to Marwell Zoo, are a highlight for all pupils, and enrich the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is a strength and parents are pleased with the good level of care their children receive. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety, including child protection, are fully in place. Pupils feel safe in school and they are confident that any bullying is dealt with quickly. They know there is someone to talk to should they have any worries. The school takes very good care of any pupils who are vulnerable, by providing a range of interventions to promote their self confidence and social skills such as 'Playpals', the school counsellor, and the successful 'Rights, Respect and Responsibility' initiative.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has good systems in place to track pupils' progress. However, these have only recently been used to set challenging targets that are monitored regularly to ensure pupils make better progress. Pupils also have curricular targets for English and mathematics but again these are new and their impact on progress is limited. Pupils with learning difficulties have clear, well monitored, targets for their learning. This, alongside a good range of specific interventions, ensures they make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's leadership, with the support of the experienced deputy, is now moving the school forward rapidly. One parent paid them tribute by saying, 'I have seen encouraging changes in terms of the school, and I have total confidence in both Mrs Painter and Mrs Boyton's leadership.' The middle managers in the school are all very new to their posts and, although it is too soon to see how their enthusiasm and experience will impact on the school's development, it is already clear they share in full the senior teachers' commitment to meeting the needs of

all pupils. The administrative team, teaching assistants and site manager are considerable assets to the school and much appreciated by all concerned.

The school knows itself very well. All staff are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development because of meticulous self-evaluation. Priorities are sharply focused and staff have challenging targets through the good performance management system. Rigorous, but new, systems for data analysis and lesson observations illustrate the school's good capacity to continue improving provision and to raise standards even further. Governors are very committed to the school and with the headteacher, have enabled the federation to begin successfully, and make best possible use of the financial support they have been given. They are now looking for ways to question and hold to account all involved as the school continues to move forward.

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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 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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	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	2
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	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

1 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Belle Vue Infant School, Aldershot, GU12 4RZ

Thank you for making us so welcome and sharing with us your thoughts and feelings about school. We think you go to a satisfactory school, but as many of you told us, it is getting better and better. You obviously enjoy most lessons and activities and contribute much in making the school a happy place to be. Your behaviour, positive attitudes to work and play and the ways in which you care for one another are really good.

The school is a caring place and the staff work hard to make learning fun. We were very impressed by your enthusiasm for all of the extra activities you join in and for the sensible way you discuss your work. The school is well organised and your headteacher and the staff make sure that everything runs smoothly. You play your part well in making decisions through the school council.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that no matter which class you are in all your lessons are as good as most of them are. We have also asked them to look at how they plan all your lessons to make sure they are as interesting as they can be, especially for the boys. In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make good progress in your learning.

We wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead inspector