

Boughton Monchelsea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118288
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312869
Inspection date	23 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Lindsay

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Clarke
Headteacher	Jerry Jarvis
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Church Hill Boughton Monchelsea Maidstone ME17 4HP
Telephone number	01622 743596
Fax number	01622 741405

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

how consistently teachers use tracking data and assessment data to plan to meet the needs of all pupils

how effective the systems are to monitor and guide pupils academically and how aware pupils are of what they need to do to improve

what the impact of leaders and managers is on achievement and standards.

Evidence was gathered from analysis of the school's data on the progress of pupils and from the school's self-evaluation, looking at pupils' work and the observation of lessons. Discussions with the headteacher and other leaders and managers took place, as well as with the chair of governors and with pupils. The parent questionnaires were also analysed. 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

Boughton Monchelsea Primary School is an average sized primary school with a very steady pupil population. Children enter with ability levels that are above those typical for their age. The great majority of pupils are White British and very few claim free school meals. Fewer pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Those who do, have either moderate learning difficulties or dyslexia.

The school has recently achieved a wealth of awards of which it is justly proud. These include the European Schools Award, International Schools Award, Green Eco Award, Activemark, Healthy Schools Award, School Achievement Award, FA Charter status, Basic Skills Quality Mark and a FLAIR award relating to the teaching of French.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Boughton Monchelsea is a good school. It has some outstanding features, such as the way pupils' personal development and well-being are nurtured. In addition, pupils of all ability levels achieve well throughout the school. The wealth of exciting experiences pupils have and the pastoral care provided for pupils, both also outstanding, ensure pupils leave school as well-rounded, mature learners. Parents are very positive about the school. However, the recent change to project based homework tasks, in response to some parents' dissatisfaction with the traditional system, does not please all. Visitors sense a strong family feel to the school. As one parent wrote, 'The school has a wonderful sense of community.' Older pupils care exceedingly well for younger ones through, for example, their roles as peer mediators and buddies.

Children enter the school with skills above those expected for their age, although their knowledge and understanding of the world is relatively less well developed. They get off to a good start in the Reception class. The great majority reach above average standards by the time they start Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards are well above national averages overall in Year 2 and Year 6. This is especially so in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2, and in English and mathematics in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. After a slight dip in 2007, relating to the particular group of pupils in Year 6, the school is once again on target to achieve standards well above the national average in 2008. The school regularly exceeds the national averages for the proportions of pupils gaining the higher levels in the statutory tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good, so that even some of the younger ones are very articulate and confident with adults. Highly trained teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. They provide good levels of support to pupils with moderate learning difficulties or dyslexia, thereby enabling them to make the same good progress as other pupils.

Teaching is good throughout the school with some outstanding elements such as the relationships and class management that ensure all pupils learn well. However, marking and the day-to-day assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are inconsistent. For example, some comments in books are very helpful in telling pupils what to do to improve but in other books there are too few comments and too much of the marking is merely cursory. There is also some inconsistency in pupils' understanding and use of targets, with some pupils unclear about how often their targets were reviewed and what their targets were.

Pupils' basic skills are developed well through a good curriculum that ensures all subjects are covered through specific literacy and numeracy lessons and topics. Pupils say the topic based elements make lessons fun and interesting. Pupils' understanding of life in other countries is extremely well developed through the International Schools links. This gives them the opportunity to communicate with schools in Spain, Austria, Japan and several other countries. Exchange visits develop their maturity greatly.

The extent to which pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences and their personal development overall is outstanding. However, pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain is slightly less well developed than their understanding of world cultures. Pupils show a real love of coming to school which is reflected in good attendance. They approach their tasks with great enthusiasm, such as when Year 2 pupils were set the task to find out about Mexican masks using an Internet search engine. Pupils show great pride in their school

and are very eager to share with visitors the things they think make it special, such as the links with international schools, the healthy week and all the visits and clubs they experience. They are very knowledgeable about how to lead healthy lives.

Behaviour is excellent in class and around the school. There have been no exclusions for many years and the headteacher rarely has to deal with any behavioural issues. This is because the long-serving staff have a consistent approach to managing behaviour. They are excellent role models, very caring, and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate to which the pupils respond well. As a result, pupils feel very safe in school and have an enormous amount of trust in adults. One pupil commented, 'Teachers always sort things out for you.' Pupils move on very smoothly to the next stage of their lives, mature, well-skilled and able to mix with others with ease.

The good improvements since the last inspection have been overseen by a strong senior leadership team and good governance. However, not all of the other leaders and managers have fully developed their roles in relation to fostering a whole-school approach to making the curriculum more creative in order to further raise standards. The school knows this and is looking at ways of improving it through a management restructure. The new hall and re-modelling of the school have been particularly effective in improving physical education facilities and sports clubs, all of which have had a positive impact on pupils' social development as well as their understanding of how to keep healthy. The school has maintained high standards over a number of years. Its evaluation of its work is accurate and there is a continued enthusiasm to do even better in all areas. This gives the school good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good education in the Reception class. They settle quickly into school life and parents are very positive about the start they make. Children are taken care of well. As a result, they love school and behave extremely well. Children join from several different pre-schools but taster visits and the recent introduction of home visits before they start help them to feel secure. They have the opportunity to go to some of the extra-curricular clubs, which also aid their enjoyment and social skills.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is enhanced well by the links with older pupils and so even the youngest children act sensibly and respond positively to each other. For example, in a lesson in the hall, children had to listen to music and imagine which mini-beast it depicted then imitate a spider, worm or bee. They all did this sensibly, listening carefully and then moved around taking care not to bump into others. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage. However, during a short observation children had less scope to think for themselves or use their imagination, as they had to imitate the mini-beast because the teacher told them to even though some had other suggestions. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good with the planned restructuring of the leadership in the school aimed at making the move to Year 1 even smoother.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of marking as well as the use of pupils' targets and the systems to track their progress to raise achievement throughout the school.
- Extend the roles of leaders and managers at all levels and develop the curriculum further to make it even more interesting for pupils and ensure their best possible progress at all times.

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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 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Boughton Monchelsea Primary School, Boughton Monchelsea, ME17 4HP

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your school. I enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, coming into lessons, looking at your work and having lunch with the school council. Your school is a good one that has some excellent features.

Here are some things that I found out during my visit to your school:

- You work hard, make good progress and achieve good results in your tests. Those who need help to learn are supported well and so make good progress too.
- You all clearly love coming to school and are very proud of your work. You are not worried about being bullied or upset, because you know that adults will help you and that you can also talk to Buddies and Peer Mediators. Everyone looks after you extremely well.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you show a lot of respect for other people.
- You have a really good understanding of how to keep healthy and your fantastic new hall, the swimming pool and all the clubs you can join help you in this.

What I have asked the school to do next:

- Make sure that all of your teachers give helpful comments when they mark your work and that they all use the information they have on your progress to give you targets that are reviewed often so that you know how to improve.
- Look at the different responsibilities of people in the school and make sure that all of the subjects you learn are interesting so that you can achieve even better results in the future.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard and to behave in the excellent way you do. Thank you for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Lindsay Lead inspector

25 May 2008

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Joan Lindsay
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