

Boughton Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 121795 |
| Local Authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 314102 |
| Inspection date | 14 May 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Patricia Potheary |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 129 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Gregg Quine |
| Headteacher | Cherie Brown |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 October 2004 |
| School address | Moulton Lane Boughton Northampton NN2 8RG |
| Telephone number | 01604 842322 |
| Fax number | 01604 842322 |

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|--------------------------|-------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Boughton is a smaller than average primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number from a variety of other minority ethnic groups. There are lower than average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and low levels of social disadvantage. The school has a significant number of pupils joining or leaving other than at the normal admission or transition times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Boughton is a good school where pupils are extremely happy. Pupils achieve well in their subjects and make outstanding progress in their personal skills. The school buzzes with exciting activity as good quality imaginative teaching and an outstanding curriculum thoroughly support pupils in their personal and academic learning. This is made possible by good leadership and management which focus strongly on the whole child, ensuring a well-rounded and balanced education.

When pupils join the school their attainment is in line with the level expected, but by the time they leave standards are above national averages, particularly in writing, demonstrating good progress. The school has recently developed a new target setting and tracking system, which has resulted in pupils' improved progress this year as work is more closely matched to their expected achievement. It does not, however, give a clear, longer-term view of how well each pupil should do by the time they leave school. This makes it difficult for governors and senior leaders to check that all pupils are on track over a longer timescale, and so ensure that each one of them makes the best possible progress.

The curriculum is exceptional in several respects and particularly in the quality of creative activity, where high quality artwork, music and drama infuse the other subjects, bringing learning to life. There is a very strong focus on learning outdoors and the school makes extensive use of its beautiful grounds to enhance lessons and learning for all age groups. Despite this, the outdoor area for Reception is not close enough to the classroom. This prevents the frequent daily flow between inside and outside, which is expected in most lessons for the youngest pupils.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, many praising the high standards of education and one typically stating that their child would leave with 'many happy memories'. Pupils are also very positive and particularly appreciative of the good quality teaching which, as one reported, 'makes lessons interesting and encourages us to be as independent as possible'.

Pupils' outstanding personal development is most evident in their confident and responsible approach to their work, where, whether in groups or independently, they seek out information or solve problems. They are encouraged to make an exceptional contribution to their school and wider community. They have recently helped appoint a new headteacher, for example, and they work tirelessly in raising money for local, national and international charities, learning much about project management on the way. The school supports pupils exceptionally well in developing a wide range of such skills for enhancing their future lives and careers.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception class is well run and provides a good level of education for the youngest children in the school. Children join with attainment in line with that found nationally, make good progress and are working securely within the areas of learning by the time they join Year 1. Good, well planned teaching ensures that lessons are engaging. In one lesson the children were clearly enjoying throwing and catching because they had been provided with an exciting variety of activities. Children in this lesson were very keen to improve their techniques and concentrated well, showing the same level of outstanding personal development as the older pupils. The good Reception curriculum is carefully constructed to allow the right balance between

teacher-led and self-directed learning. There is outdoor activity with a dedicated space, but it is not close by. This makes it more difficult for both planned and spontaneous flow between the classroom and outdoors and some learning is inhibited as a result. The quality of record-keeping is excellent and enables the teacher in charge to build effectively on the children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan and measure each pupil's achievements over a longer period so that school leaders can ensure that all pupils are doing well over time.
- Improve the outside learning facility for pupils in Reception to enable a more integrated and free-flowing use of the outside space as a learning tool.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Progress and achievement are good overall for pupils in all age and ability groups. Although pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations when they join the school, standards soon begin to rise above national averages following the good start in Reception. Progress and achievement in the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are good. The quality of pupils' writing is a strength of the school with plenty of imaginative pieces written from an early age. There are no significant differences in the rate of progress for any particular age or ability group, including the most able and those who find learning difficult, but not all pupils progress at the same pace. Quite a few make outstanding progress, but a few make satisfactory rather than good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy and appreciate school very much. This is evident in their outstanding attendance, in their excellent behaviour and in their enthusiasm for all aspects of their life in school. They show a very responsible and hard-working attitude in lessons and are exceptionally independent, which is a quality valued and fostered by the school. There are always pupils taking the initiative to open doors, put equipment away or help a friend with their work. Pupils act as 'chums' to younger ones and are proud of the rewards they earn for their community involvement. Pupils show an exceptionally strong awareness of how to lead healthy lives and there is a very high take-up of sports after school. Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe is also very well developed and there are hardly ever incidents of unkind or dangerous behaviour. Pupils are compassionate and caring towards others and there is a strong spiritual element to the way they appreciate the beauty in the world around them. Pupils are very conscious of the independence and trust given to them by the school and the responsibility they have to use them wisely.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are many strengths in teaching. The quality of planning is high and assessment is used well to make sure that each pupil, regardless of ability, makes good progress in lessons. The use of interesting resources and activities enlivens lessons and, as one pupil said, they really

like the way 'teachers make learning fun but still make sure we do our work well'. In an English lesson, for example, treasure maps made by the pupils were used to help them learn how to write story beginnings. This captured their interest and, as a result, their skills developed rapidly. Teachers' knowledge is generally strong across a wide range of subjects. Nevertheless there are variations where different teachers are more confident in some subjects than others and learning sometimes slows as a result. The school is seeking to address any such shortcomings through staff development and some specialist teaching.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets pupils' needs very well indeed. It is rigorous in promoting good basic skills and focuses strongly on helping pupils to become inquiring learners and take growing responsibility for their own learning. The curriculum is outstanding in supporting all aspects of pupils' excellent personal development. Despite the difficulties experienced by Reception there is a major focus on learning outdoors, with many different learning areas set up in the grounds. This has resulted, not just in an exceptionally healthy attitude to exercise, but also a very keen awareness of the environment. There are extensive connections between subjects to foster a deep and creative approach to learning with very strong performing arts. Very good links with other organisations and schools mean that projects and visits are used very effectively to enrich provision further, including a wide range of activities to broaden the experiences of gifted and talented pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school meets basic requirements for safeguarding pupils. There are good links with other agencies to look after pupils and give them any additional support needed. The support for pupils' personal development is very effective in encouraging them to attend regularly and behave so well. There is now a good system for setting short-term targets and monitoring pupils' progress towards them. The new progress books provide clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve, which they really appreciate. Standards and pupils' aspirations have recently risen as a result. This system is not well embedded, however, and does not have any links to longer-term individual targets to make sure that the few who fall behind eventually do well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, well supported by leaders at all levels, has shown excellent vision and direction in developing a depth of curriculum which strongly enriches the lives and personal development of all pupils. Self-evaluation is good and senior leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. This has enabled them to pinpoint where improvements are most needed so that shortcomings are addressed in a timely manner. This is why standards are so consistent. There have been recent improvements in mathematics, ICT and geography. Whole-school targets are challenging and are regularly met or exceeded. The capacity to continue improving is good.

Despite these strengths, the new system for monitoring pupils' progress is complicated and does not yet provide a clear overview of how well different pupils are performing over time.

The school recognises that this system is not developed sufficiently well to help leaders, including governors, secure improved progress for all pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 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

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| 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**

15 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Boughton Primary School, Northampton, NN2 8RG

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

Your school has a lively and happy atmosphere. It is a good school, with many excellent things going on, just as you described. Good teaching helps you to make at least good progress in your lessons, and outstanding progress in your social and personal skills. You do exceptionally well in writing. Those of you in Reception also make good progress although we have asked the school to improve your outside learning area. You might like to contribute some ideas to this.

Staff and governors work hard to keep improving the school. For this reason, the standards you reach are rising. We like your new progress reports and think you do too. We have, however, asked your teachers to check your progress over a longer timescale to make sure everyone is doing as well as possible. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and doing your best to reach your targets.

Your teachers see to it that you have an outstanding range of activities to help you develop excellent independence and creative skills. You were keen to tell us that the school also keeps you safe and looks after you well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating such a healthy diet. Your behaviour is also excellent, especially in the way you value learning.

We are also impressed with the responsibilities that you take on within the school and how much help you give to others. You clearly really enjoy coming to school. We think that this, alongside your high quality basic skills and excellent skills in working together, will help prepare you very well for your next school and future lives.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Potheary Lead inspector

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