

Botley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123067
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314476
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Barnard Payne

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	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Annette Ahern
Headteacher	Mr Mark Prowen
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
School address	Elms Road Botley Oxford OX2 9JZ
Telephone number	01865 248573
Fax number	01865 244127

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils attending this average sized primary school are from White British backgrounds. The percentage from minority ethnic groups is a little higher than average. A growing number are at early stages of acquiring English. Fewer pupils are eligible for free school meals than the national average. A few more pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools and these include difficulties with reading and writing and with behaviour. The school has the physical education Activemark award. Most Foundation Stage children are educated at the school with which Botley shares a site, Elms Road. The children on Botley Primary's roll have Botley staff as key workers. In practice, the free-flowing nature of activities means that staff from both schools work together.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 and the standards they attain in mathematics.

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 to reach the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. However, overall, their progress in recent years in Key Stage 2 has been declining, and is inadequate. In the most recent national tests, Year 6 pupils' English standards were much lower than the national average. Fewer pupils reached the highest levels in English or mathematics when compared to pupils in other schools nationally, with English results significantly below. The school has taken the situation seriously and focused on improving progress. Already, in English, there have been improvements in standards and achievement. Progress in mathematics is weaker and has been inadequate in recent years.

Comments from parents who returned questionnaires show concern. One commented that the school, 'Has huge potential to do so much better'. Many feel that the school has not done enough to build good relationships with them and keep them informed. Through expanding its senior leadership team and by making better use of its pupil tracking information, the school now has an accurate picture of the quality of its provision and the progress pupils make throughout the school. This has enabled it to target achievement in English and to make rapid improvements over the past year. Through senior leaders working alongside local authority partners, the school has improved its monitoring of teaching and learning, leading to teachers raising their expectations, although there is still a long way to go. Taking account of improvements in Foundation Stage provision, Key Stage 1 accommodation, provision for physical education and information and communication technology (ICT) and in after-school care, the school now has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The school has not yet found better ways to keep parents informed.

The school takes good care of pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and their behaviour is good. They get on well together and feel safe in school. Pupils' attendance is good. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning activities, but does not maximise opportunities for pupils to take a lead in promoting healthy life-styles or contributing more to the school. Consequently, their adoption of healthy attitudes is satisfactory and they take up opportunities for physical activities, but they have limited opportunities to take responsibility. However, the school council has contributed to improvements in the school play areas. Overall, pupils' acquisition of skills to help them later in life is satisfactory.

Lack of whole-school planning for the more able pupils has led to inconsistencies from class to class in their achievement across the curriculum. This reflects a lack of capability in middle management, as subject leaders do not have the expertise to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and pupils' progress in their subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school has taken effective steps to improve in its provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The partner school runs the Foundation Stage and tracks the children's progress from day to day. Effective liaison between the schools provides a high standard of care and strong awareness of the children's achievement. Planning effectively covers all the areas of learning. Good teaching ensures that activities are stimulating, wide-ranging and provide a wealth of experiences. Children start the Foundation Stage with the skills and abilities typical for their age. Rates of progress have been improving over the past year due to the partnership arrangement. Children now make outstanding progress in developing their social skills and independence. They get on well with each other and are enthusiastic learners. They have access to the excellent resources of the partner school, including the extensive outside facilities. Learning is enriched by weekly visits to the Forest School, a woodland environment that strongly enhances the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children also make good progress in literacy and numeracy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently challenge pupils, particularly the more able, to achieve as well as they can.
- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Develop the roles of middle managers so that they are all able to take a lead in driving up standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Current school data indicate that pupils' attainment in English is now in line with the national average, including for those pupils reaching higher levels. The school does not predict that pupils will make the same gains in mathematics this year and its analysis indicates that progress in mathematics is still inadequate in building on previous achievement. Progress in science also declined in the last tests, but recent school data show improving progress. The school accurately identified slow progress by some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities last year. This led to effective training for teaching assistants with the result that these pupils now make satisfactory progress due to the school's successful use of flexible support strategies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are involved in supporting several charities. There is little bullying and, where this does occur, pupils have confidence that the school deals with it effectively. Pupils know how to stay safe, for example when using the internet. They build good relationships with both their peers and with adults. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. Strategies to help pupils with behavioural difficulties enable them to make good progress in their personal development. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally positive, but their personal development is limited by having few opportunities to contribute to the life of the school apart from the school council. Inadequate achievement in English and mathematics in recent years has restricted pupils' acquisition of basic skills in Key Stage 2, but they are now making satisfactory progress in English and ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are now satisfactory although there are still some inconsistencies. In Key Stage 2, teaching is still more uneven than elsewhere in the school. There are strengths in teaching at each key stage. Current lessons in Key Stage 1 are well-planned. Teachers throughout the school establish positive relationships with pupils and most use a good variety of activities to engage and motivate them; these include use of talk-partners, group work and separate challenges set for each range of ability. Some learning objectives are not clear, leading to pupils being unsure about what the teacher expects of them. The range of writing pupils undertake and their positive responses to it reflect improvements in English teaching. The school has responded positively to the increased demand for language support for pupils at an early stage of acquiring English. These pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring the language, in part because the school buys in specialist support. However, teachers' planning for this group shows some lack of understanding, for example, where materials do not match pupils' ages.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' personal development. A satisfactory programme of personal, health and social education ensures that pupils are encouraged to stay healthy and safe and to respect others. This is augmented by cycling proficiency and road safety training. The school addresses the additional challenge of mixed-age classes through a two-year curriculum planning cycle and, overall, this works satisfactorily but there are inconsistencies in teachers' short term planning reflecting a lack of curriculum coordination across the school. This has had an impact on standards in English and mathematics. The provision the school makes for the more able pupils is too dependent on individual class-teachers rather than reflecting a consistent whole-school approach.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school cares for its pupils well. Health and safety procedures are robust and all the necessary checks are in place to ensure pupils are protected. The school's behaviour policy promotes good relationships and ensures that pupils know what kind of behaviour is unacceptable. The school has strengthened its systems for tracking pupils' progress since the last inspection. However, the school does not use assessment information consistently to plan lessons that challenge all pupils, including high attainers. Pupils find marking and feedback too inconsistent, and teachers do not always make clear to pupils how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has not addressed the decline in pupils' achievement until recently. The restricted size of the senior leadership team compounded the problem. To alleviate this situation, the school has appointed new staff to fill leadership roles from the beginning of the next school year. The school has also worked productively with local authority staff in order to expand the

leadership's capacity. There is now better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which has resulted in a number of strategies to address problems. This work is recent, but there is evidence that it is beginning to bear fruit. For example, the quality of teaching has improved through monitoring and support. There has been a consequent improvement in achievement in English in Key Stage 2 although targets set for the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenging. The school has not defined or developed the roles of subject leaders and they are not sufficiently accountable for provision in their areas. Governors' commitment to the school is strong, although they have only recently started to hold leaders to account with any degree of rigour.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
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	4
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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

03 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Botley Primary School, Oxford, OX2 9JZ

First, thank you for welcoming us to your school for the inspection. By sharing your views with us, you have really helped us to get to know the school.

We know that mostly your work in lessons is satisfactory, you are safe, and the school looks after you well. We have found that your achievement has been too low as you move through the school. We can tell this by comparing your test results in Year 2 with those in Year 6. Progress has been getting slower over the years. We have therefore given the school a Notice to Improve and asked it to speed up your progress. Progress in English has been better over the past year but progress in mathematics is still too slow. To make the necessary improvements the school also needs to involve more teachers in assessing both your work and the teaching in each subject.

We know that you enjoy the kinds of lessons where you take an active role, including discussion and practical work. We were impressed with your politeness and behaviour. You have satisfactory attitudes to staying healthy and many of you enjoy physical activities, both in lessons and after school. Where you have opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school, you do this well, but apart from the school council, this does not happen very often.

This is what we have asked the school to do:

- Ensure that you are provided with work that challenges you all so that you achieve as well as you can.
- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics.
- Help those teachers who are responsible for different subjects to take a lead in driving up standards.

You can help by agreeing with your teachers what targets you should be aiming for, particularly in English and mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Barnard Payne

Lead Inspector