

# Bitham Brook Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126291
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315477
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Carnaghan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	271
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Kimberley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Arundell Close Westbury BA13 3UA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 859172
<b>Fax number</b>	01373 859172

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bitham Brook School is larger than average. It has few pupils from minority ethnic groups and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average; most of these have dyslexia or speech, language and communication difficulties. The school holds both Activemark and Healthy Schools awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Bitham Brook School provides a good education and a happy, harmonious environment where children thrive. The school strikes a good balance in promoting personal and academic development. The calm, considerate behaviour of pupils is an exceptional feature.

Parents express confidence in the school and find staff friendly and approachable. The survey revealed no significant concerns. One typical comment was, 'Teachers' care of my son has been excellent and very supportive; staff are always available if a problem arises.'

Pupils report they are most happy at school and their positive attitudes and maturity promote good learning. Their personal development is good. Pupils have good understanding of healthy lifestyles and they enjoy the exercise available at break times because they are well supervised and have access to stimulating equipment. They praise the good relationships they have with teachers and know there is always a friendly face to turn to. However, their understanding of multicultural Britain is disappointing because the school does not promote this area sufficiently well.

Pupils are well cared for. Arrangements to ensure care are robust and pupils appreciate the many kindnesses they are shown. Good adult role models inspire older pupils to look after young ones and the 'seniors' take their jobs, such as keeping an eye on more vulnerable pupils at play, very seriously. Good marking and clearly understood targets provide effective academic guidance.

The school monitors teaching well, promoting best practice effectively, and this has improved lessons. Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons display a thoughtful atmosphere and pupils and teachers work closely together, promoting good learning. This has a positive impact on achievement, which is also good. Children start school with lower than expected skills, but get their school careers off to a fine start in the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave the school, standards are at least average, and they improved in 2008. Areas of underachievement have been addressed. For example, standards in mathematics are now higher and boys' achievement, which was too low, is also improving, although it still has not caught up with that of the girls.

Good leadership and management underpins the school's strengths. Effective self-evaluation, through rigorous monitoring by teachers and governors, helps the school tackle areas for development with confidence. The school's planning is soundly based and effectively addresses important priorities. Governors are rigorous and supportive in equal measure.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

On entering school, children's skills and knowledge are wide-ranging but, overall, below those expected for their age. They achieve well, and by the time they finish the Reception Year, standards are broadly average. Children benefit from the caring, supportive environment, structured and stimulating learning opportunities and good, interesting teaching. Their progress is closely tracked and lessons planned to support identified weaknesses. Children with learning difficulties such as speech, language and communication are identified early and given personal support. The Foundation Stage leader provides clear guidance and support to her colleagues, who work well as a team. Accommodation is good, with a safe outdoor area.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Develop learning experiences for boys, engaging them more fully in their learning and raising their achievement.
- Improve opportunities to improve pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start school with lower than expected skills. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage and across the school ensures that they make a good start to their learning and maintain this good progress in later years. By the end of Year 6, standards are at least average, and in 2008 were above average. This is an improvement on standards at the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with dyslexia and speech, language and communication difficulties and those few who do not speak English as their first language, is good.

There are some variations within this positive picture. Mathematics standards lagged behind other subjects for some years. Rigorous actions by the new coordinator have been effective and current standards are similar to those seen in English and science. Boys' standards have been consistently lower than girls' and below those of boys nationally. The school has recognised the significance of this and has started to adapt teaching and the curriculum so they are more appealing to boys. There is evidence that this is working in Years 3 and 4, where standards are more even, but there remains a gender gap in Years 5 and 6.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding, contributing to pupils' enjoyment and pride in their school. They support and respect one another and are polite; listening and collaborating well in lessons. They are confident and enjoy talking to visitors.

Pupils feel safe in school; they understand potential hazards and know adults support them when necessary. They feel safe from bullying, which is rare. Attendance is average. Pupils develop great independence in the classroom. This, and the good progress they make in gaining important skills in using language, number and computers, means they are well prepared for the future.

Pupils' involvement in the school and local community is good. They take part in numerous events involving local schools. The 'seniors' system develops older pupils' sense of responsibility and helps younger ones settle into school. The school council represents pupils' views effectively and contributes to decision-making, for example over the extension to the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their multicultural awareness is limited and they are not sufficiently prepared for life in a multicultural society.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Pupils say, 'Our teachers make the lessons fun.' Lessons are characterised by good classroom relationships, very good behaviour and an eagerness to learn in calm, purposeful, well-resourced classrooms. Lessons are well planned, with suitable work for differing abilities. There is sufficient

challenge, and work proceeds at a crisp pace so pupils learn well. Teachers ask appropriate questions, and brisk, lively teaching captures pupils' interest. Some activities, such as the Reception class follow-up to a visit to Bristol Zoo, elicit pupils' exuberant participation. When this happens, teaching is outstanding, learning is at its best and enjoyment is obvious. Pupils work with independence and are encouraged to collaborate in their learning. They particularly enjoy this. For example, in an assembly, Year 2 pupils demonstrated how they could more easily solve difficult problems in mathematics by working together. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with dyslexia and other learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language.

The school has good strategies to provide relevant targets and this supports learning, raising pupils' awareness of their progress. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, correcting, supporting and encouraging. However, not all marking refers to targets and pupils take too little notice of teachers' comments.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum promotes good progress and develops pupils' skills. Meaningful cross-curricular links are made. For example, a Year 1/2 science lesson identifying characteristics of minibeasts was followed by a literacy lesson in which the stimulus for writing and discussion was a live giant snail. There is a strong emphasis on sport, art, drama and music. French is taught throughout Key Stage 2. There is good use of information and communication technology throughout the school. The school does not plan effectively to deliver multicultural education as part of its curriculum.

Pupils' experience and skills are extended by a range of visitors and visits and the provision of a wide variety of well-supported clubs. Residential visits to coastal centres help develop pupils' geographical skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff know pupils well, pastoral care is good, and these factors contribute to their enjoyment and personal development. The rapport between pupils and adults is good. Pupils with dyslexia and other learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make similar progress to their peers. The school has robust systems in place for safeguarding, risk assessment and child protection.

Pupils have clear targets, based on rigorous monitoring of their progress and attainment. These are not individualised, but the school is working towards this. Pupils know the objectives and success criteria for lessons and how to improve their work. The reward system, which recognises excellence in behaviour and effort, is appreciated by all pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides good leadership and is a positive force in the school, closely involved with staff and pupils alike. The school functions well as a calm, cohesive unit and is a happy place in which to grow and learn, as pupils readily testify. Close teamwork amongst staff ensures

that the way they approach pupils is consistent and caring. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Like the rest of the school, it has beneficial links with educational and other organisations in the area.

Effective monitoring ensures that the school knows itself well and has improved its practice in a number of areas, notably teaching and learning. The school carefully analyses assessment information to identify areas for improvement. Both mathematics and boys' achievement have been under the spotlight recently. Whilst the mathematics issue has now been addressed, improving boys' performance is slower, although their standards are moving in the right direction. The headteacher, staff and governors collaborate closely in planning for the future, focusing on the most significant priorities but do not plan interim checks on progress. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in raising standards, and its capacity for future improvement is also good.

The governing body has rigorous systems to monitor the school's activities and keep well informed. They are thoughtful and committed friends to the school, ready to both challenge and praise, as appropriate. Financial management is very good, confirmed by the recent award of the financial management standard.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bitham Brook Primary School, Westbury BA13 3UA

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome when the inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and chatting to such mature, keen young people. You told us you think Bitham Brook is a good school and we agree!

The headteacher and staff lead and manage the school well. They work hard to make sure you are well taught and looked after, and so you are. Teachers take good care of you and offer good advice to help you improve your work.

Lessons are interesting, teachers plan well for everyone and you contribute fully with your excellent behaviour and hard work. This means you learn and achieve well. Standards are improving and those in maths, which used to lag behind, have now caught up. Boys' standards are still below what they should be, but the school is paying attention to this and they are slowly improving. The mix of topics and subjects you study (the curriculum) is good and we know you like the many after-school clubs, especially those which offer sport.

All these good features help your personal development to be good. You get on very well together and are very independent workers. Your knowledge of how to stay safe and healthy is also good. Like most schools, there are some things that could be improved. I have asked the school to concentrate on two.

- Provide work that is more interesting to boys so that they achieve better. Boys, you can help in this by taking your studies more seriously.
- Make sure that the curriculum includes more work on different cultures of Britain and the wider world.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was great meeting you.

Sincerely

John Carnaghan Lead Inspector



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Lead Inspector