

Beddington Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102983
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	323720
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Robin Hammerton HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Catherine Forster
Headteacher	Miss Liz Kearney
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2006
School address	Croydon Road Bond Gardens Wallington SM6 7LF
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, toured the school at work, observed lunch and play times and held meetings with governors, staff, parents, pupils and the local authority. They scrutinised samples of pupils' work, school records, policies, agendas and minutes of meetings. They considered the questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How well are teaching and the curriculum personalised to meet the needs and interests of all individuals and groups of pupils?
- How sharply do leaders, managers and governors know the detail of how well the school is doing, and then use this to plan precisely focused further improvements?
- How effective are the school's links with parents in promoting and sustaining high achievement?

Information about the school

This is a large infant school with a Nursery. Pupils can spend two years in the Early Years Foundation Stage, then a further two in Key Stage 1. The deputy headteacher at the last inspection became headteacher in 2007. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in 2008. The school has gained the Activemark and the Healthy School Award, among other awards.

The school's circumstances are in many ways similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The socio-economic conditions in the suburban area it serves, as well as the proportion of pupils coming from minority ethnic groups, are close to average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is a little below average, while a slightly larger than usual number of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a popular, friendly and successful school. It provides a very good education for its pupils. At a time of significant recent change in its senior leadership, it has managed to maintain the very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics it had reached at its last inspection. Pupils come to school enthusiastically, sure that they will be kept safe and enjoy a happy and stimulating day. They fulfil the school's longstanding motto: 'Reach for the stars'.

The headteacher is exceptionally successful in ensuring that staff feel highly valued and work well together, in a highly supportive and hardworking atmosphere. Consequently, there is a constant buzz of purposeful activity in bright and inspiring surroundings. Teaching is unfailingly good. This ensures that, day after day, pupils' learning consistently grows, and so they are rightly proud of their achievements. All groups attain well. In this particularly encouraging atmosphere, pupils' personal and social development is also at a high level. They work and play together very well, with classes often singing happily as they move around the grounds, and take a real pride in their school. The inclusive school council is highly effective in enabling the voices of pupils to be clearly heard.

The headteacher and senior leaders know the needs and circumstances of all pupils in detail. The quality of the safeguarding and care of all pupils is excellent. There are excellent arrangements to ensure any pupils who have significant additional needs gain full access to what the school offers and have their needs well met. For instance, those at an early stage of learning English are carefully and regularly assessed and well-focused actions are taken as a result. Similarly, interventions for any individuals and groups who are making slower progress than their classmates are carefully structured. In regular lessons, however, despite the consistently good teaching and much improved assessment procedures, activities or work set are not always sufficiently personalised or matched to the needs of each pupil. Consequently, some work can be too easy, too hard or insufficiently motivating for some pupils.

The new leadership structure is well organised. The school is managed with great devotion and operates smoothly. However, although staff consider and discuss much of the school's work, the school does not collate or analyse this information well, so its written self-evaluation is insufficiently thorough. This does far from full justice to the school's many strengths, nor does it identify with sufficient clarity areas needing improvement or refinement. As a result, the school improvement plan, while

containing some suitable priorities, does not communicate ambition well or identify aspirational or precise objectives for the school's future. It does not show clearly how the school's development is monitored and evaluated over time. Governors do much very good work but their role in improvement planning and assuring standards and the quality of teaching and curriculum is limited. The school has continued much of its long-standing success, nevertheless, and made some improvements in some areas such as writing; its capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

The curriculum is very good, helping to promote the high standards. Year group teams make good refinements to it and there have been particular recent improvements in some subjects including literacy and physical education. Subject leaders work hard to support their colleagues but, for the most part, their leadership role is underdeveloped. As a result, standards in subjects outside the core of English and mathematics are not known and some parts of the curriculum are in need of rejuvenation in order to become outstanding. Similar to the school improvement plan, subject plans are lists of actions to be done rather than well-targeted improvement programmes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that work set in all lessons is always closely and specifically matched to the assessed needs and interests of pupils.
- Ensure the school demonstrates more clearly its ambition to be outstanding in all aspects by:
 - improving considerably the school's formal self-evaluation so that it is much sharper in its assessments
 - ensuring the school improvement plan shows clearly what is to be improved, how this will be measured, who is responsible, and in what timescales
 - involving governors better in self-evaluation and improvement processes, especially in respect of teaching, learning, standards and curriculum
 - empowering subject leaders to take a greater whole-school responsibility for leading their subjects and evaluating standards.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Unvalidated results from national testing in 2009 indicate that Year 2 pupils have attained significantly above the national average for 2008 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is in line with the school's consistently high level of performance over recent years. This year, there has been improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in writing, following action taken when this measure fell to slightly below average in 2008. There is little difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils.

The reasons for this are clear. All pupils are actively and enjoyably involved in their lessons. They work well together in groups, settling quickly to their usually stimulating tasks, listening carefully to clear explanations from teachers and other adults. They behave in an excellent way, keen and ready to learn. In all classes,

starting in the Nursery, pupils access equipment and resources independently and confidently. They enjoy learning outdoors, as well as in the classroom, which adds an additional richness, enjoyment and depth to their learning, and promotes even better concentration. Over time, this consistent, productive learning experience builds and builds, so that pupils achieve very well. This was shown in a Year 2 literacy lesson, where the very good knowledge of a range of traditional tales pupils had built up over time effectively enabled them to understand, and make comparisons with, modern stories.

In the playground and around school, pupils' behaviour is also excellent; they play together harmoniously and in a very caring way. They are able to use a whole host of play equipment independently and very safely, with no need for significant adult intervention. This thoroughly enjoyable and happy play is delightful to observe and shows pupils' strong moral and social development. They understand well the need for healthy lifestyles and are well prepared for the next stage of education. Attendance is broadly average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons throughout the school are consistently good and those observed in the Nursery were outstanding. The key strengths of the teaching are:

- lessons progress at a good pace with many opportunities for active learning
- appropriate learning objectives are clearly defined, with activities and resources chosen to suit the objectives closely
- teachers show good knowledge of the subject matter and give clear explanations, enabling pupils to grasp concepts quickly and understand their work

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

- talk and discussion are well used in lessons to promote and deepen learning, and this helps all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language
- relationships and pupils' behaviour are excellent, promoting a very positive learning environment.

However, too often, all or most pupils do much the same work. Assessment of pupils' needs and learning is not used consistently enough to ensure that the activities provided closely match the needs of all pupils and are always challenging at the right level for everyone. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Teaching assistants often support the learning of particular groups, such as those who have learning difficulties. They enable these groups to access the learning well.

The school is an exciting, stimulating place for a young child to be. Displays are striking and interactive with, in some cases, pupils contributing by writing answers or comments on them. Stimulating role play areas, such as the dinosaur café, are used throughout the school to good effect. There is well-structured specific provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English. Effective outdoor learning within the attractive school grounds is a major feature. The curriculum has been thoughtfully refined over time with topics well linked together. Literacy and numeracy skills are well developed across the curriculum. For example, the recent farm visit in the Early Years Foundation Stage was used well to stimulate writing. There is a wide range of carefully planned visits out of school. However, the curriculum is not currently outstanding, as the school asserted. To become so, it needs to be more highly personalised to more pupils, and more pioneering in some subjects. Some units of work, while successful, could benefit from being brought closer to the 'cutting edge' of curriculum development. The school operates a good range of clubs. These are well attended, with good representation of different groups of pupils.

The school cares for its pupils superbly. Pupils are all very well known to staff, who do everything possible to make sure they are happy and thriving. Pupils feel totally safe and confident in the school. Where any pupil faces particularly challenging circumstances, as a matter of course, staff work very closely with parents, carers and appropriate agencies to ensure that the child concerned is as fully and happily as possible involved in school life. An assembly attended by inspectors was enjoyable and very purposeful. Pupils and the headteacher explored together in a highly interactive way, the theme of kindness, which is deeply embedded in the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear view of what she wants the school to be: happy, high achieving, inclusive, stimulating and caring, to name just some features. In this close-knit school community, with stable staffing, this vision is understood by governors, staff, parents and pupils. It is a reality and has continued from the last inspection.

However, while the school is undoubtedly seeking to be excellent, and is effectively sustaining high outcomes, its ambition for future development is not communicated well through its rather unfocused improvement planning. Similarly, self-evaluation is neither detailed nor rigorous. Too much is said in it about what is being done, rather than the impact of these actions on outcomes for pupils. This makes needed improvement (for example in the use of assessment data in lessons) harder to achieve. Another important instance of this issue is in the school's promotion of community cohesion. The school has not made the necessary analysis of its community's needs and attributes, nor planned specifically to meet these needs. Although many activities in the school help support community cohesion, this work is not fully efficiently targeted or evaluated.

The school's new leadership structure is carefully organised. The senior leaders, including the relatively new deputy headteacher and the 'Every Child Matters' coordinator, have clearly defined and appropriate responsibilities. These ensure that all pupils have equal and fair access to what the school offers. Practices for safeguarding pupils are meticulous. Staff performance management arrangements are well established and effective. Curriculum subject leaders do much very useful work in providing advice and resources, and some have guided important developments, but in general their roles in actively leading their subjects throughout the school are not fully developed. This means that the overall planning in some subjects, while it is good and has clear links to other subjects, lacks some of the rigour and coherence needed to make the curriculum outstanding.

The school's communications and partnerships with parents and carers, including some who are not able to be in the school often, are outstanding. The school frequently provides very clear information about teaching and the curriculum. Regular curriculum workshops are much appreciated by parents, helping them to better understand how they can support their children's learning and contribute ideas. Communications, mutual respect and the level of joint working between home and school are all excellent. There is a real sense of partnership, which substantially helps pupils' learning and well-being. Parents really appreciate this.

The governing body is well organised and committed. It contributes much to the school's success and has, for example, very astutely supported the school through its recent leadership changes. It has relatively little involvement, however, in challenging and supporting the school's core work in teaching, learning, curriculum and standards.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Nursery is outstanding, as it was at the last inspection. Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities, indoors and out, carefully chosen to meet their needs and interests. The children make many choices and quickly develop skills in independent learning. With the support and skilled encouragement of adults, including parents, they take turns well, are respectful of each other and use their imaginations to the full. For example, a small group of children loved painting a 'whole picture' all of their own. Another group were fascinated by looking at snails, drawing, comparing and discussing them, thus improving their vocabulary. They also showed good concern for the snails' welfare.

In the Reception classes, as at the last inspection, and the Early Years Foundation Stage as a whole, provision and children's progress are good. The majority of children in the current Reception cohort have reached a good level of achievement. Teaching is consistently good; time is used well with motivating lessons moving at a good pace and in a friendly, safe atmosphere. However, children are given too few opportunities to help plan and review their own learning and activities. In the new building, classrooms are of a good size and are organised in a stimulating way, but the outdoor areas, although easily accessible, are small and not conducive to providing the full range of activities.

The Nursery and Reception classes and staff are effectively managed on a day-to-day basis. Daily and weekly planning is completed and put into action efficiently, covering the full range of areas of learning. However, in Reception, learning objectives are not always matched specifically enough to the differing needs of pupils. The ongoing development of best practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as effectively led as the day-to-day operations are managed. In the improvement planning, there is a lack of clarity about what outcomes the actions taken are intended to achieve for the children. Because of this, the impact of improvement activity is reduced and its evaluation imprecise. The school's self-evaluation of the Early Years Foundation Stage lacks detail and rigour.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

As well as receiving questionnaires, inspectors spoke with several parents during the inspection. Parents and carers are delighted with the school. They appreciate the ready availability and hard work of staff ('they all give 110%', said one). They are well informed about the school and their children's progress. They feel their children settle quickly, are cared for very well, achieve highly and are very happy. Rarely do they see any kind of bad behaviour. They appreciate the home visits made before children start school. These views are fully supported by inspection evidence.

Some parents, while very pleased with the school, noted that some pupils were not fully challenged by certain work in class, work that they could already do. Inspectors checked this and found the parents' views about this to be correct.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Beddington Infants' School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children. This is why the numbers of responses in the table below are higher than the number of questionnaires returned.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 572 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	4	0	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



30 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beddington Infants' School, Surrey, SM6 7LF

You may remember that we were the 'visitors' who came to your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you work and play. Some of you gave us beautiful 'welcome' cards you had made, which was really kind. Thank you! We came to find out as much as we could about your school and we have written a report about it. This letter is to tell you what we said in the report.

We found that your school is really good. You clearly enjoy going to school and do well in your lessons. By the time you reach the end of Year 2, you are very good at reading, writing and mathematics. The staff teach you well and your parents help a great deal too. We saw how much you like your lessons, some of which are outside (which is a really good idea). Your behaviour was fantastic in lessons and at playtimes. What a wonderful playground you have; it was lovely to see you all enjoying it so much, wearing your sun hats. Wearing the hats is very important and one of the things that makes the school a very safe place.

Well done to the litter-pickers and to everyone who does important jobs to help in school. It is good to see that the school council makes a real difference. We saw an assembly about being kind, and that is exactly what the school is like. Everyone is kind and friendly. Your teachers and the other adults look after you very well.

We have made two suggestions to help make the school even better. One of these is to ask the teachers always to set you work that is just right for each one of you and your needs. The second suggestion is for the staff and governors to check more closely how well the school is doing and then, when things need to be changed or improved, to plan for this more clearly.

Once again, it was very good to meet you all. I wish you and the school the very best for the future. I would like also like to say good luck to those of who are moving to a new school after the summer holidays. That will be exciting but I am sure you will miss Beddington Infants' School. You will always remember it.

Yours faithfully

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector

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