

Bow Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113060
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325746
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	130
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Stanbury
Headteacher	Hazel Fox
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Station Road Bow Crediton EX17 6HU
Telephone number	01363 82319
Fax number	01363 82642

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bow Community Primary School is located in a rural area of south Devon and serves two villages and outlying areas. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. A few come from other European countries and speak English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided for in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school provides a range of extended services for families and members of the community. It holds a number of awards, including Healthy School, Activemark, Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and Eco School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bow Community Primary School is a good school. The headteacher has provided good direction for the school since the last inspection and this has led to improving standards, good teamwork and a strong sense of community. As a result of good teaching and an interesting curriculum, pupils achieve well, regardless of their background or ability. They start school with skills and understanding that are below the levels expected nationally, and reach average standards by Year 6. Last year's Year 6 made good progress between Years 3 and 6 and this continues to be the case for pupils currently in Key Stage 2. In the past, standards at Year 2 have shown more fluctuation than those at Year 6 but these are improving and pupils now also make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' achievement has picked up since the last inspection because there has been a clear and determined focus on the right priorities. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve pupils' writing. Standards in mathematics have also risen. The arrangements for teaching pupils in small groups for mathematics and aspects of literacy are working well and having a positive impact upon pupils' achievement. The school is developing further the way it tracks pupils' progress. This is used well to identify pupils who are not making as much headway as would be expected, and the general use of targets to move pupils on in their learning is also good. However, the specific end-of-year targets set for each pupil are not sufficiently ambitious, as they are geared towards pupils making satisfactory rather than good progress.

Pupils very much enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. They act responsibly and show very good attention to keeping safe. Pupils make a very strong contribution to the school and wider community through, for example, taking part in fundraising activities and running their own clubs. Many of them submit their suggestions for ways to improve the school. Parents are also very positive about the school and praise its friendly atmosphere, the approachability of staff and the way the school communicates with them. Staff work hard to give pupils an understanding of life beyond their immediate locality and bring many visitors into school to broaden pupils' experiences. They show good levels of care and promote pupils' well-being and safety well.

Lessons are well planned and many teachers make them interesting, for example through involving pupils in group work and linking learning in one subject with another. Pupils speak very positively about their 'Robo lab' which they love using. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through lesson observations and looking at pupils' work. This highlights strengths and weaknesses in the teaching but does not focus enough on how well individual pupils, or groups of pupils, learn in lessons. Governors provide good leadership, with an appropriate balance of support and challenge.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is generally below the levels expected but varies widely owing to the small number of children in each year group. Staff give good attention to the children's welfare. As a result, they develop positive attitudes to learning and school life, and make good progress in aspects of their social and emotional development. The approach to teaching children about letters and sounds is working well and supporting the development of their early reading and spelling skills. This is another area where progress is good. Despite this, their overall achievement is satisfactory because planning for the six required areas of learning is not always detailed

enough to show what and how children will learn. Although some children exceed the standards expected, overall standards by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are below average.

Teaching is satisfactory. Adults provide good role models and form good relationships with children. Children learn in a positive atmosphere and praise is used well to encourage them. Adults also provide good informal opportunities for children to develop their independence and take responsibility, for example through acting as job helpers for the day. Teaching is generally effective when adults work with small groups. However, children all tend to do the same tasks and opportunities are missed to tailor questions according to individual children's capabilities and extend tasks for children who could cope with additional challenge.

Although each child is known well and assessments of progress are accurate, much of the detail is held informally. The system for recording information from observations and assessments is not robust enough to build up a detailed picture of each child's development and guide planning for the next steps in their learning. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve planning, assessment and record keeping in the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure information is used well to match activities to children's needs.
- Ensure that the end-of-year targets set for each pupil are more challenging.
- Make sure all evaluation activities are firmly focused on pupils' learning and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at both key stages are broadly average and improving. Pupils' performance in the Year 6 national tests has picked up over the last two years. Year 2 results returned to broadly average in 2008, after dropping to below average in 2007, and the school predicts they will improve further this year. The school responded well to the recommendation at the last inspection to raise standards in mathematics. In addition, there has been an improving trend in writing, which has been a priority area for the school. The pupils who did not perform well in the 2007 Year 2 tests are now in Year 4. These pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and many are making good progress, especially in writing. The unvalidated results for 2008 indicate that pupils who left Year 6 last year made good progress between Years 3 and 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly, open and interesting to talk to. They relate very well to one another and to the adults in school, and act in a safe and considerate way towards others. The playground is a good example; children play happily together and there is a very strong sense of community spirit. Pupils are respectful and accepting of one another. For instance, they are very aware of how important it is to welcome pupils from other countries who join the school and who may not speak much English. Pupils respond very well to opportunities to take responsibility, for example by running dance and fun clubs for other children or taking part in the popular £10 challenge. They very much enjoy this project, which contributes well to their wider awareness of budgeting, raising money, cooperating and working towards a common cause. Members of the school council are proud to speak up for their school. They have a strong sense of fairness

and tolerance and are very clear that their school is a 'kind place' and has a 'lively atmosphere'. Attendance has been affected by illness over the last year, which has been largely responsible for the below average attendance levels.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned and teachers have very good relationships with pupils. Some well-focused teaching occurs in the focus groups for mathematics when tasks are planned at different levels to match pupils' varying levels of understanding. Learning is also often effective in the small group sessions in Years 1 and 2 to help pupils learn about phonics. Teaching in these situations is having a positive impact on pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy and helping to raise standards. Many teachers use a good range of questioning techniques to involve pupils and extend their learning. For example, in one lesson the teacher asked pupils to assess for themselves how well each of them had managed to solve mathematical problems. Pupils are given opportunities to work in small groups and respond very well on these occasions, which contribute well to their personal and social skills. Their learning is not as effective where teachers occasionally talk for a substantial part of the lesson and pupils remain largely passive. Teaching assistants often provide good support when working with small groups but are not always used to full effect during whole-lesson activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's focus on developing links between subjects is increasingly supporting pupils' achievement and enjoyment. They are aware that the teachers are planning the curriculum in a different way and recount many examples of projects they have enjoyed, such as 'Field to Plate' and 'Planet Earth'. The good provision for information and communication technology is supporting learning well and pupils are often seen using computers during lessons as well as more informally. They also enjoy and support the good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils talk enthusiastically about various visitors who have come into school to share their skills and experiences. These clearly enliven their learning and boost their enjoyment of school. The curriculum is adapted well to provide for pupils' differing needs. Two good examples are the focus groups in mathematics and the work that takes place in small groups to improve literacy skills. The school provides good programmes of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help them achieve well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for in this school. The family atmosphere, appreciated by so many parents and pupils, means that everyone is well known and there is constant attention to pupils' well-being. Arrangements for protecting children and ensuring their safety are robust. The school maintains close links with parents and works successfully with other support agencies and schools. Clear attention is given to including all pupils and helping any who are encountering particular difficulties to attend school and learn successfully. The school has an efficient system for tracking pupils' progress and it is currently being developed to allow the headteacher and teachers to monitor pupils' progress more regularly. As it stands, it is used well to identify which

pupils need extra intervention and support. This is especially evident in English and mathematics. Teachers let pupils know the National Curriculum levels they have reached and involve them well in their own personal targets. This process is having a good overall impact on improving progress but the specific targets set for the end of each year are a relative weakness as they are not sufficiently aspirational.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a very clear sense of strategic direction. She knows the school well and has had a clear impact on its improving effectiveness and rising standards. She has developed the capacity of leadership among staff by strengthening the role and impact of other teachers with leadership responsibilities. This has created a strong sense of teamwork and shared commitment to the school's further improvement. The data from national tests and teachers' assessments are being used increasingly well by the literacy, numeracy and special needs coordinators, as well as the headteacher, to evaluate pupils' progress and standards. The evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate and a range of methods is used to determine how well pupils are learning in each class. There is some variability in its effectiveness. For example, not all lesson observations focus clearly enough on how well individuals or groups of pupils are learning. The school development plan guides the school's work and sets clear priorities but the criteria used to evaluate how successful actions have been are not always precise enough. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

26 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Bow Community Primary School, Crediton, EX17 6HU

You may remember I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed being in your school and thought it was very friendly and welcoming. I know you do too. A special thank you to all the children who met me and those of you who chatted to me in the playground and around the school. It was very useful to be able to meet so many of you to hear your views and thoughts.

Your school is good and you are getting a good education. The teachers plan lessons carefully so that you learn well and make good progress. You help to make the school a special place in which to learn and work because of your positive attitudes to school and your excellent behaviour. I hope you continue to get the most out of school because this will help to put you in a strong position for when you leave.

To improve your school further, I have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to work on three things:

- Improve the way work is planned for the youngest children in Class 1 and the way adults record their progress.
- Make sure the target levels that are set for each of you to reach by the end of the year are ambitious ones.
- Make sure that when the headteacher or other teachers visit lessons, they focus carefully on how well each of you is learning during the lesson. I hope you continue to enjoy your time at the school and wish you well in the future.

With best wishes

Margaret Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector